PATTERNS OF POWER

French Senegal

The Complete Study

1659 — 1854 — 1960

Thomas J. Bryan
with Claude (Anthropic)

Held as tested, not revealed.

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PREFACE AND OUTLINE

Front matter · how this study was made, the disciplines it holds itself to, and a map of its thirteen parts

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to the French conquest and administration of Senegal, from the trading posts of the seventeenth century to independence in 1960. Thomas J. Bryan set the subject, the method and the disciplines below, and held the collaboration to them; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying every load-bearing quotation, date and figure by web search against a source reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, applying the framework module by module, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. The framework's concepts are the series'; the Senegalese findings are what the evidence returned when they were laid over it.

The disciplines

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources are quoted exactly, in the original language with a translation, at the length the argument needs: laws, decrees, circulars, parliamentary speeches, military manuals. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased and credited, never quoted at length. A law is a legal fiction whose precise wording *is* the point, and softening it would destroy the evidence.

Verification, and the refusal to guess. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the study says so in the module's note on sources or leaves the line out — a doubtful line is dropped, not guessed. Several such refusals are recorded in these pages: a widely circulated Faidherbe quotation about burning villages on the Taouey, which appears identically across the polemical literature and always without a citation, is not used; no figure is given for the dead of the French conquest, because none exists; and Albert Londres's seventeen thousand dead on the Congo–Océan is explicitly fenced off as an Equatorial African number that must not be borrowed for Senegal. Contested figures are given as ranges with the dispute named.

Information asymmetry. The study exists to set the exact public words beside the exact private or on-the-ground words, and to let the gap speak. The arithmetic is laid out; the sum is left to the reader. Ferry's *devoir de civiliser les races inférieures*, said from the tribune in 1885, sits beside the ministry's 1854 instruction that France must be *les suzerains du fleuve*. The 1881 press law's *sans autorisation préalable* sits beside the 1921 decree's *sans autorisation préalable du gouverneur général*. The pavilions at Vincennes sit beside Van Vollenhoven's circular telling his own officers that the African authority does not exist.

Legibility is not pardon. The order's logic is explained without being excused, and legal fictions are named as fictions. Suffering is held with gravity; neither flattery nor demonisation is permitted. The strongest case for the French century is stated at full strength in the final module, in the terms its serious proponents actually use, and answered without flinching — crediting the achievement without swallowing the self-justification, naming the cost without denying the achievement.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case.

Held as tested, not revealed. The pattern is treated as something discovered and tested against the evidence, not handed down as doctrine — a lens laid over the record, a tendency and never a law.

What Senegal added to the framework

Four findings ran against what the earlier studies in this series had led the framework to expect.

A conqueror can arrive in the middle of somebody else's unfinished conquest. Every previous case met a foreign order that had finished becoming native — Caesar's Gaul worn into Roman Gaul, the Arab conquest worn into the calendar of North Africa, the Chinese classics worn into what a Vietnamese scholar simply was. Islam had been on the Senegal river since the 1030s and had *not* finished: it held the clerical lineages entirely, was taking the villages steadily, and had been beaten three times by a warrior aristocracy that sold its teachers into the Atlantic. France destroyed that aristocracy, declined to put anything of its own into the space, and watched the conversion complete itself in two generations — then rented the result. A conqueror who arrives during an unfinished conversion is not a bystander to it; his violence is one of the forces deciding whether it completes.

What a conquest comes for predicts nearly everything else about it. France took the crop and not the ground. There is no Senegalese Mitidja and no White Highlands, a few hundred Europeans in Saint-Louis against a million cultivators left standing on their own land — and from that single choice follow the thin floor, the absent settlers, the preserved village society, the unopposed Islamisation, and the departure without a shot.

An open exit can stabilise an order rather than threaten it. British Gambia runs three hundred and fifty kilometres into the middle of Senegal. Tens of thousands walked out during the conscription years. The order held, because the other side ran the identical machine, so that crossing changed the flag on the customs post and cost a man his lineage land. The exit that worked never crossed a border: it went east into a Murid community, where a man got land and a marabout he believed in, and stayed on the tax roll the whole time. A ruler will tolerate, and eventually subsidise, any exit that relocates the subject while keeping him in the ledger.

And a gap between what a state says at home and what it does abroad does not require concealment to survive. France censored African-language publication in Africa and made almost no attempt to control what reached Paris, because the instruments to try with had been abolished by its own most celebrated statute. Gide published in 1927, Londres in 1929, and forced labour continued to 1946. Two years after *Terre d'Ébène*, thirty-three million tickets were sold to see the empire in a Paris wood, while four thousand two hundred and twenty-six people went to see the refutation three miles away.

The thirteen parts

Landscape · The Soil That Freed Whoever Touched It. The two societies on the eve: a warrior aristocracy financed by the Atlantic trade, with a religious counter-power in its villages it had beaten three times and could not extinguish; and a republic that had abolished slavery in 1848, seated a man of colour in its parliament, and written into law that French soil frees whoever touches it — then quietly authorised its officials on that soil to turn the touching man away.

1 · The Suzerains of the River. The founding conquest. For two centuries the French paid tribute to the states of the

river; the conquest is datable as a ledger event, ordered by merchants and executed with gunboats on the only dry-season water in the country, by an army bought from the people it was pointed at.

2 · Sixteen a Year. The settlement. A colony that took the crop and not the acre, and drew its decisive border not between France and Africa but between four coastal towns and everywhere else — with the door out of subjecthood opening, in the federation's last fifteen years, about sixteen times a year.

3 · Thirty-Three Million Tickets. The story told about the conquest: announced in the Chamber and demolished there two days later, sold to eight million visitors in a Paris wood, and preached in Senegal to almost nobody except the men being recruited to hold it.

4 · Tirailleur Y En A Bon, Lui Toujours Obéir. Formation. A school of hostages, a language printed for soldiers with the grammar of argument engineered out of it, and a countryside conceded to the one institution still willing to teach anybody anything.

5 · Fifteen Days and a Hundred Francs. Why the ordinary man complied: a punishment kept too small to be worth resisting, a tax with only one lawful discharge, and an open border two days' walk away that almost nobody used.

6 · Nine-Tenths of the Value. What was taken. A coast extracted three ways in three centuries, ending with a peasantry that kept its land, lost every alternative to one crop, and paid more into the French treasury than it received back until the year the arrangement began to end.

7 · Written in an Indigenous Language. Whether a republic founded on the free communication of thought could keep its public from noticing what was done in its name. It could not, and mostly did not try; the censorship it built was pointed the other way.

8 · The Pact of Bordeaux. The hierarchy and the default. How each rank was made to serve the whole by serving itself, what that cost in legitimacy, and what France did with the one man in the chain whose interests ran the other way.

9 · Sont et Demeurent. The liberty variable. A century of genuine elections on a franchise granted by a republic, abolished by an empire, restored by a republic, confined to five per cent of the country, bought with conscription, and narrowed by judges who ruled that the words *are and remain French citizens* could not be argued from.

10 · The Word They Left in English. How it ended — not by a rising in the groundnut basin, which never came, but because the power that guaranteed the arrangement was beaten in six weeks by other Europeans, had to be rescued from Africa, and afterwards found the price of empire being set for it in Hanoi and Algiers.

11 · Thirty-Six Years and Five Months. The accounting, set out in the units each column was measured in, with the sum left where it belongs.

12 · Private, Second Class. What this conquest shares with every other in the collection, what belongs to it alone, and the strongest case for the French century in Senegal, stated in full and answered without flinching.

A note on what remains to be done

This study records its own outstanding debts rather than concealing them. Several load-bearing texts were reached through a single reproducing source and are flagged, in the module where they appear, for collation against the original before any scholarly use: the ministerial instruction of 31 December 1818; the decree of 4 August 1921 on the press in French West Africa, on which one module's central finding rests; Albert Londres's sentence from *Terre d'Ébène*; the full sentence from Mangin's *La Force noire*; the judgments of the

Court of Appeal of French West Africa on the 1916 citizenship law; and the Thiaroye archival material, which this study reached only through the published historians and not at the Service historique de la Défense. Where a figure is disputed — the toll at Thiaroye above all — the dispute is reported and left unresolved.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

THE SOIL THAT FREED WHOEVER TOUCHED IT

Landscape · the two societies on the eve of conquest — a warrior order living off a religious conquest that had not yet finished, and a republic that had written universal freedom into its own statute book while its two islands lived by the trade in men — set side by side before Faidherbe took the governorship in December 1854

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The eve that lasted two hundred years

Every other conquest in this collection has a morning. Algiers has 14 June 1830 and the landing at Sidi Ferruch; Vietnam has the guns off Tourane in the late summer of 1858; even Kenya has a railhead crawling inland from a fixed year. Senegal has no such morning, and the absence is the first thing the landscape has to explain, because it changes the shape of everything downstream. Saint-Louis was established on an island at the river's mouth by mariners out of Dieppe in 1659, and the French installed themselves at Gorée on 1 November 1677 — and then, for the better part of two centuries, conquered essentially nothing. As late as 1848 the French colony of Senegal still amounted, in fact, to the two islands of Saint-Louis and Gorée, the forts strung along the river, and the post at Sédhiou in the Casamance; the rest of the country was independent. Two hundred years of continuous presence, and a state the size of a few sandbars.

So the eve of conquest here is not a date but a decision — the moment a trading company's beachhead resolved to be-

come a territorial power — and that decision can be dated with unusual precision, because it was petitioned for, drafted, and staffed. The plan the conquest actually ran on was a synthesis of ministerial instructions that reproduced two petitions written by Marc Maurel of the Bordeaux house of Maurel and Prom and signed by the wholesalers and notables of Saint-Louis, the first in December 1851 and the second in February 1854; and on 16 December 1854 the ministry made a thirty-six-year-old engineer officer named Louis Faidherbe governor of the colony. That is the threshold. What follows is an account of the two societies standing on either side of it.

It is worth naming at once the peculiarity that will do most of the work in this study, because it is easy to lose in the narrative and impossible to recover once lost. Before France conquered the Senegalese interior, it had spent two centuries as that interior's arms supplier, its principal customer, and — at one decisive moment — the guarantor of the very ruling class it would later destroy. The conquest of 1854 was not an encounter between two strangers. It was a landlord finally evicting a tenant he had been trading with, and quietly propping up, since before Louis XIV came of age.

The order that was itself a conquest

No conqueror ever meets a timeless order. He meets an earlier conquest that has been naturalised until it looks like the ground — and in Senegal there are at least three of them stacked up, which is why the usual account of a European arriving among immemorial kingdoms is worth nothing here.

The states France would fight — Kajoor, Bawol, Waalo, Jolof, and, to their south, the Serer kingdoms of Sine and Saloum — were the fragments of an earlier hegemony. Kajoor broke from the Jolof empire in 1549 under the crown prince Amari Ngoone Sobel Fall at the battle of Danki, and the rupture cascaded, with Waalo and Bawol following, so that by 1600

the empire was effectively finished and the title of Buurba survived as prestige without power. Jolof itself had been laid over people it displaced: the region was inhabited first by Soce and then by Serer, who were pushed south by the Wolof by the thirteenth century, and before the empire the country was held by lamanes of a handful of landholding families. Beneath the Wolof states, in other words, lay a Serer substrate that had already been overlaid once, and beneath the Serer kingdoms lay the lamanic order of the masters of the earth. Even the royal house of Sine was of foreign extraction — a Guelowar maternal dynasty out of Kaabu, married into the old Serer paternal clans in the fourteenth century — though here the honest reading requires a caution the popular accounts omit: the tradition of a "battle of Troubang" that drove them north was shown by Charles Becker to be a displaced memory of the much later fall of Kansala, and Niokhobaye Diouf argued that the Guelowar entered Serer country not by conquest at all but by asylum and marriage. The recursion is real; the particular story is contested; the study will say so rather than tidy it.

What held these states up was a floor of a distinctive and legible kind. The Wolof and Serer kingdoms were caste societies — royals, nobles, free men, the endogamous occupational castes of smiths, leatherworkers, weavers and griots, and beneath them the enslaved — and the arm of the crown was a class of warrior-slaves. The ceddo were military slaves whom the elite used to enforce the payment of tribute and to police the other slaves; they were fiercely opposed to the strict practice of Islam, famous as drinkers and as brave fighters, and they raided freely, including inside their own kingdoms, for booty and for captives. Here is the machine in its plainest form: a coordinating class that had captured the surplus, an armed body drawn from outside the free population and therefore owing everything to the crown, and a revenue stream that ran on selling human beings to the men on the islands. The logic of arming slaves is the same wherever

it is found, and nobody has to teach it: a man who owns nothing can bequeath nothing, so an army of such men throws up no rival dynasty. The Ottomans reached that answer with the janissaries; the damels of Kajoor reached it on their own, four thousand kilometres away, with no contact and nothing borrowed, because both were solving the same problem — how to hold a throne against the class most likely to take it.

And it must be said plainly, because the study will not otherwise be believed when it says harder things later: this order was a genuine order, not a rabble. It had a law of succession, a council of electors, a system of land tenure, a court poetry, a code of honour, and a self-understanding that its people held as simply the shape of the world. That it began in conquest does not make it a fraud. A built thing that became real is a more durable and more genuine thing than a lie, and the ceddo world was authentically the world of those who lived in it, right up to the moment it was destroyed.

The conquest that had not finished

Now the thing that makes Senegal unlike every other conquest in this collection, and it took eight hundred years not to happen.

Islam was not new on the Senegal river. War Jabi of Takrur, on the lower Senegal, converted and imposed Islamic law in the 1030s, dying in 1040 or 1041, and is generally reckoned the first ruler of the western Sudan to make Islam the religion of his state — which places the creed in the valley four and a half centuries before a Portuguese sail appeared off the Cap-Vert, and drove the Serer lamanic class, whose office included the guardianship of the old religion, southward in refusal. Eight hundred years, on the arithmetic. On the pattern the Vietnamese case established, that ought to have been ample: eight centuries is roughly what it took Confucianism to become, for a Vietnamese scholar, simply civilisation. It was not what happened here.

What happened instead is that Islam settled into the Wolof states as a permanent, unresolved civil war. The clerical lineages — the *serigne*, the marabouts, keeping their schools and their Qur'anic curriculum and their claim to a purer law — occupied a position inside the kingdoms without ever capturing them; the courts and their ceddo remained pointedly, ostentatiously outside the creed. Three times the clerics tried to take the throne itself, and three times they were beaten. In 1673 the Berber marabout Nasir al-Din launched the movement French sources call the Toubenan, from the Wolof word for conversion: promising to end the endemic raiding and the great export of slaves, the movement became a revolution, the peasantry and the local Muslims flocked to it, the brak of Waalo was killed and replaced with a puppet who took the title master of prayer, and in Kajoor the reigning damel was overthrown and killed. It was the most dangerous moment the warrior order ever faced, because for the first time the men with the guns were opposed by something the villages already believed. It failed by 1677, and why it failed is the hinge of this entire study.

A century later the clerics tried again and won — but next door. The Torodbe threw out the Denianke dynasty of Futa Toro in 1776, and after Sulayman Bal's death the almamate passed to Abdul Kader Kan, a learned teacher and judge, who built mosques, pursued an aggressive policy toward his neighbours, and in 1785 obtained an agreement from the French to stop trading in Muslim slaves and to pay customs to his state. The Wolof kingdoms answered by hardening. When the marabouts of Kajoor began agitating in the wake of Futa Toro's revolution, the damel struck first, capturing the leader's son and selling him into slavery; the clerical rising was crushed, its leader killed, and many of the marabouts sold as slaves in their turn — the deliberate enslavement of Muslim clerics by a Muslim-adjacent court being about as sharp an index of the two worlds' incompatibility as the record offers. When Abdul Kader marched on Kajoor in

about 1796 with the largest army Senegambia had seen, the damel poisoned the wells of his eastern provinces, and the exhausted Torodbe army was routed at Bunxoy and the almamy himself taken prisoner.

And here is the tell, and it is in the vocabulary of the observers. Earlier European accounts had simply described the Wolof as Muslims; from the end of the eighteenth century and across the nineteenth, European travellers began instead to say that the Wolof were Muslims whose rulers were "pagans" — a category that had not previously existed, invented to describe a split that had newly opened. In Waalo, Islam had first been the province of the elite; after the marabout war the ruling class increasingly rejected it while it spread further and further among the ruled, and the brak himself converted only in the nineteenth century. That is not a creed that has become the furniture of the world. That is a creed still winning, village by village, among people whose kings had refused it and were prepared to sell its teachers into the Atlantic to keep refusing it.

The difference from the other colonies in this collection is exact. In Vietnam the French found a Confucian order eight centuries old that had long since stopped being anybody's conquest and had become simply what an educated man was; in North Africa they found an Arab conquest of the seventh century worn smooth into the calendar and the law. Here they found a conversion still in mid-course — and the scholarship is close to unanimous that it was only from the end of the nineteenth century that Wolof society converted to Islam entire, that is, under and after the French conquest. One of the standing puzzles of the colonial period in Africa is that colonial rule ushered in a faster expansion of Islam than the preceding thousand years had managed. Whether France's floor was a *cause* of that completion, and not merely its backdrop, is the central question this study exists to answer.

Whose side the trading post took

Which returns us to 1677, and to a question worth asking of the French on their sandbar: never what they believed, only what they were paid to do.

The marabout revolution of the 1670s had one non-negotiable plank — it was against the export of Muslims into the Atlantic. That plank aimed directly at the revenue of the men on the islands. And so, when the clerical viceroys suspended the trade, the French at Saint-Louis went to the aid of the kings the marabouts had thrown down: Nasir al-Din's rising across the Wolof states in 1673 was defeated through an alliance of local forces and the French, and after his death in 1674 the old hierarchies, backed north of the river by the Hassani warrior tribes and vigorously supported by the French, reasserted themselves. Read it slowly. A European trading company, on a sandbar, with a garrison that could not have held a mile of the mainland, put its weight behind a warrior-slave aristocracy and against a mass religious movement whose principal demand was that people stop being sold — because the movement's success would have closed the company's ledger. No one had to be a monster to make that choice. The position made it, and men in the position took it, and the consequence was that the ceddo order stood for another century and three-quarters on a floor that France helped underwrite.

Meanwhile, on the islands themselves, something was growing that no other colony in this collection possesses, and that France would one day display to itself and to the world as proof of what its empire was for. Saint-Louis and Gorée had produced a Franco-African creole society — the *habitants*, the métis merchant families, the celebrated *signares* who owned ships and property and commanded clerks — a class that controlled the up-river trade, financed the Catholic institutions, and furnished the towns their notables. A métis mayor was designated at Saint-Louis as early as 1778. The town

was substantial by the standards of the coast: Saint-Louis held around ten thousand people in 1826. Its living came from the river — gum arabic, harvested by the slaves of the Arabo-Berber tribes of the desert edge, bought at the seasonal markets called *escales* and warehoused at Saint-Louis before shipment — and from the dark blue Indian cottons, the *guinées*, that were the currency of that trade. And its living came, for most of its history, from selling people.

The metropole knew what it had there, and described it, in 1818, in terms it would spend the next century and a half quoting to itself. The minister of Louis XVIII wrote in his instructions of 31 December 1818:

> *Au Sénégal, la démarcation des états par la couleur est inconnue : presque toute la population libre de Saint-Louis et de Gorée consiste en métis issus du commerce de nos traitants avec les femmes du pays. Elle jouit du même rang que les blancs. C'est un mulâtre qui est maire du chef-lieu de nos possessions et un noir peut le devenir.*

> ("In Senegal, the marking-off of ranks by colour is unknown: almost the whole free population of Saint-Louis and Gorée consists of people of mixed descent, issuing from the dealings of our traders with the women of the country. It enjoys the same standing as the whites. It is a mulatto who is mayor of the chief town of our possessions, and a black man may become one.")

Every clause of that is true. Every clause of it is also being written about two islands whose commerce, at the moment of writing, still rested on the produce of a slave-raiding aristocracy three miles away across the water. Both things are the case at once, and the whole of the study is in learning to hold them together.

The metropole that abolished the distinctions of the human family

The France that appointed Faidherbe was not a crown claiming by the raw right of conquest. It was the France of the Rights of Man, and — decisively, and only six years before — the France that had abolished slavery in its colonies in the name of its own creed. The decree of 27 April 1848, drafted for the Provisional Government by Victor Schœlcher, opens on the ground of principle and not of interest:

> *Le Gouvernement provisoire, considérant que l'esclavage est un attentat contre la dignité humaine ; qu'en détruisant le libre arbitre de l'homme, il supprime le principe naturel du droit et du devoir ; qu'il est une violation flagrante du dogme républicain : Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité…*

> ("The Provisional Government, considering that slavery is an outrage upon human dignity; that by destroying man's free will it suppresses the natural principle of right and of duty; that it is a flagrant violation of the republican dogma: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity…")

Two of its articles carry this study on their backs. Article 6 provided that *les colonies, purifiées de la servitude, et les possessions de l'Inde seront représentées à l'Assemblée nationale* — "the colonies, purified of servitude, and the possessions of India, shall be represented in the National Assembly." Article 7 declared that *le principe que le sol de la France affranchit l'esclave qui le touche est appliqué aux colonies et possessions de la République* — "the principle that the soil of France frees the slave who touches it is applied to the colonies and possessions of the Republic."

Both were honoured, and both were immediately bent, and the gap between the text in Paris and the practice at the gate of Saint-Louis opens here, four thousand kilometres wide, for the first time.

The representation was real. Under the decree, a métis, Barthélemy Durand-Valantin, was elected on 31 October 1848 as the first deputy of Senegal to the Constituent Assembly; on the order of five thousand electors were enrolled — an electorate that was almost entirely African and mulatto, whites being perhaps one per cent of the colony's people — with something over two thousand voting. (Sources disagree: a figure of 4,706 is also given, apparently for those on the roll rather than those who voted; the study gives both and settles neither.) In 1848 there was a Black-and-métis electorate sending a man of colour to sit in the parliament of France. Nothing in Algeria, nothing in Vietnam, nothing in Kenya, would ever come close.

The emancipation was real too, and small. The freeing of slaves in Senegal in 1848 concerned about six thousand so-called *captifs*, almost all of them the property not of Europeans but of the *habitants* of the colony — the métis and African families who had long been prominent in its business and society. The Republic paid their owners for the loss: compensation was fixed by colony, and Senegal's rate was 225 francs a head — above Madagascar's, below every other. The men who had built the coastal society on the trade in men were indemnified, in gold, by the Republic of the Rights of Man, for ceasing to own them.

And Article 7 — the soil that frees whoever touches it — lasted about a year. Schœlcher had insisted on the clause precisely because Algeria and Senegal sat surrounded by slaveholding populations; the effect was to make the French enclaves not merely islands of liberty but havens, to which a slave from the interior might walk and be free. Within 1848 and 1849, as tension with the Moors and the slaveholding peoples of the interior grew, the naval ministry had the article's application in Senegal relaxed, and local authorities were given wide powers to turn away fugitive slaves who presented themselves at the enclaves — and household slavery went on in the interior of what became French West

Africa until a further decree in 1905. The sentence that named the study stayed on the statute book in Paris, entire and unrepealed, and was quietly not applied at the gate of Saint-Louis. That is the information asymmetry, in its first and purest instance: one text, two readings, held apart by four thousand kilometres of ocean.

The threshold

Set the two societies side by side, then, in the winter of 1854.

On one side: a warrior aristocracy running a slave-raiding economy that its principal customer had abolished six years earlier, its floor intact, its legitimacy holding among its own, and a religious counter-power in its villages that it had beaten three times and could not extinguish — a counter-power that was at that very moment accelerating, because al-Hajj Umar Tall, a Tijani cleric of Futa Toro, proclaimed his jihad in 1852 after defeating the king of Tamba, and turned north and east with an army equipped with European guns. The interior's own religious revolution and France's decision to conquer it arrived in the same three years, and neither was caused by the other.

On the other: a republic that had put the oneness of the human family into its own law, that had a Black electorate and a man of colour in its Chamber, that had abolished slavery and then paid the slaveowners — and whose merchants at Bordeaux and Saint-Louis, their gum revenues eroding and a new crop called the groundnut opening in front of them, had petitioned the ministry to make the trading post into a state. The commercial crisis of the gum trade in the late 1830s and 1840s is what pressed the French toward conquest of the lower Senegal valley; by the 1870s the gum trade had been eclipsed by the rapid expansion of the peanut. The conquest was asked for by name, by named men, in writing, and the ministry wrote their plan into its instructions.

The robe that would cover all this had, uniquely, its principal exhibit already in hand before the first gun. That is the fact to carry forward.

What this landscape settles, and what it leaves open

Three things found on this eve change what the collection has been assuming, and each should be carried forward as a question rather than a conclusion.

First: France did not arrive after a conquest had settled. It arrived in the middle of one. Every other case in this collection met a foreign order that had finished becoming native — Caesar's Gaul worn into Roman Gaul, the seventh-century Arab conquest worn into the calendar and law of North Africa, the Chinese classics worn into what a Vietnamese scholar simply *was*. Islam had been on the Senegal for eight hundred years and had done no such thing. It held the clerical lineages entirely and was taking the villages steadily, and it had been refused, deliberately and with violence, by the men who held the guns — which is why European travellers had to invent the awkward formula of a Muslim people with pagan kings. What France met was not a society but an unfinished argument: a warrior class with no creed the peasants shared, and a creed the peasants shared with no force behind it. The consequence to test, and not to assume, is severe. The ceddo aristocracy was the only organised power that had ever beaten the marabouts, three times in a hundred and twenty years. France destroyed it. **A conqueror who arrives during someone else's unfinished conversion is not a bystander to it; his violence is one of the forces deciding whether it completes.** If the record bears that out, France did not merely borrow an established native machine, as it borrowed the mandarins of Hue — it helped finish building one, and then paid rent on it for sixty years.

Second: the story France told about itself was already written, and already aimed at Paris, before the conquest it was used to justify. In 1848 the Republic did four things in Senegal that nothing compelled it to do. It enfranchised an electorate that was almost entirely Black and métis. It seated a man of colour in its parliament. It paid gold to slaveowners for ceasing to own men. And it wrote into law the principle that French soil frees whoever touches it — then quietly authorised its own officials on that soil to turn the touching man away. Not one of those was needed to hold two sandbars. Every one of them was legible in the *Moniteur*. Whatever else the conquest of 1854 would be, it began six years after the proof of its own benevolence had been filed. The exhibit came first; the thing it was meant to justify came after.

Third: for two hundred years the thing exported from this coast was the population itself, and that is a kind of extraction the collection has no proper category for. A landlord taking a share of a harvest needs the farmer alive and in place, and will therefore leave his village standing. A settler taking the ground needs the farmer gone, and will therefore not. The Atlantic trade was neither: it did not want the land, and it did not want the producer alive *here*. What it wanted was the man. That difference financed the whole warrior order, and the accounts of the islands in 1854 make no sense without it, so it is registered here and argued in full when the ledgers are opened.

Legibility is not pardon. Naming the ceddo order's conquered origin does not diminish it, and naming the Republic's genuine and costly emancipation does not launder what was done afterward. Both societies on this eve were made things that had become real to those inside them. What the study measures is what happened when the second, cut for an audience across an ocean, was laid by force on the first — and, uniquely in this collection, on a third party that

neither of them controlled, which was waiting in the villages with a Qur'an.

A note on sources. The exact quotations are public-domain primary texts, given in the original with translation. The decree of 27 April 1848 (preamble; Articles 1, 6 and 7, including "*le sol de la France affranchit l'esclave qui le touche*") is quoted from the text as reproduced by Légifrance and French Wikisource, and cross-checked against the reproduction on the Digithèque MJP (Université de Perpignan). The ministerial instruction of 31 December 1818 ("*la démarcation des états par la couleur est inconnue…*") is quoted from the Digithèque MJP's Senegal dossier; the study notes honestly that this is a single reproducing source, and the wording will be re-verified against the *Bulletin des lois* before final compilation. Nothing else in this landscape is quoted; all modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The account of the Jolof empire, the battle of Danki (1549) and the successor kingdoms; of the ceddo as a class of crown warrior-slaves; of the Toubenan movement of 1673–77 and its defeat with French assistance; of the Torodbe revolution in Futa Toro (1776), the almamate of Abdul Kader Kan, the enslavement of the Kajoor marabouts and the battle of Bunxoy (c. 1796, following Jean Boulègue's dating); and of the jihad of al-Hajj Umar Tall from 1852, follows the standard reference and scholarly accounts, above all Boubacar Barry on Senegambia and the Atlantic trade, Jean Boulègue on the Wolof kingdoms, Martin Klein on Islam and imperialism in Sine-Saloum, James Searing and David Robinson on Islam in the Wolof states and on French Islamic policy, and Louis Moreau de Chambonneau's contemporary account of the Toubenan (written 1677, published by Carson Ritchie in the *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, 1968), which is used as evidence and not quoted. The claim that Wolof society converted to Islam entire only from the end of the nineteenth century, and the observation that colonial rule accelerated Islamisation faster than the preceding millennium had, are the settled view of that literature and are the study's central hypothesis to test, not its conclusion. The Guelowar dynasty's arrival in Sine is given with its historiographical dispute intact: Henry Gravrand's "battle of Troubang" was shown by Charles Becker to reproduce the much later fall of Kansala, and Niokhobaye Diouf argued that the Guelowar entered by asylum and marriage rather than by conquest. Figures are given as ranges or with their disputes named: the Senegalese electorate of 1848 is variously given as about five thousand enrolled with over two thousand voting, and as 4,706, and both are reported; the emancipation of 1848 in Senegal concerned about six thousand *captifs*, at a compensation rate

of 225 francs a head. The number of captives shipped from Gorée is *not* used here, and will not be used loosely later: the popular figures are seriously contested by historians, Philip Curtin's accounting is far lower than the memorial tradition holds, and the later accounting of costs will give the range and name the controversy rather than write from cultural memory. Faidherbe's appointment (16 December 1854), the petitions of Marc Maurel of Maurel and Prom (December 1851, February 1854) and the resulting "plan of 1854" follow Leland Barrows's archival work, paraphrased. Where the record is thin — the population of the interior states on the eve, above all — the study leaves it qualitative rather than falsely precise.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

THE SUZERAINS OF THE RIVER

Module 1 · the founding conquest — how a trading company that had paid tribute for two centuries decided to stop paying, and took a country with gunboats on the only water in it and an army bought from the people it was pointed at

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The tenant

Begin with the fact the founding legend cannot accommodate, because everything else in this module follows from it: until 1854 the French in Senegal had no floor of force at all. They had a lease.

French authority in 1852 was confined to a series of miniscule trading stations, the two principal ones being Saint-Louis on N'Dar island and Gorée, a rocky islet off Cape Verde; the truly sovereign powers in the region were the African polities — the Trarza, Brakna and Idaw 'Aish confederations on the right bank of the river, the Tukulor almamate of Fouta Toro dominating six hundred kilometres of the left bank, Kajoor stretching from the river opposite Saint-Louis to Cape Verde, and Waalo in the delta. And France did not merely coexist with these powers; it *paid* them. The tolls and dues the French called *coutumes* — trade taxes, land-occupancy taxes, navigation tolls on the river — were levied by African rulers on French commerce as of right, and the French government and French private parties paid them, year after year, as the price of doing business in someone else's country.

The relation is best measured not by treaties but by posture. On the eve, a French officer summarised the position with a candour later obscured: not a single native believed the French capable of resisting the Moors, and the Trarza emir Mohammed el-Habib was in the habit of saying that at the first rupture with the whites he would come and make his prayers in the church of Saint-Louis — a boast taken seriously by every tribe on the river, and one the French had done nothing to disprove, having in 1850 sent him a deputation of the town's own inhabitants and merchants bearing a humble petition for peace. Senegal appeared on the official registers as a French possession. In reality the French were there on sufferance, and knew it.

Which inverts the question this module has to answer. It is not *how did France conquer Senegal*, a matter of columns and gunboats that can be told in a paragraph. It is *when did paying stop being cheaper than taking* — and that question has an answer to the franc.

The ledger that flipped

Two numbers move, and the conquest follows them.

The first is gum arabic, which had been the river's revenue for two centuries and was, on the eve, in crisis: the Saint-Louis traders were deep in debt to the wholesale houses, the desert tribes controlling the harvest extracted what they liked at the *escales*, and the price in Europe was falling as industrial substitutes arrived. The commercial crisis of the gum trade in the late 1830s and 1840s is precisely what pressed the French toward the conquest of the lower valley. The second is the groundnut, which grew not on the river but inland, in Kajoor and Bawol — which meant that the new money lay in exactly the country France did not hold, and could not reach, and did not police.

So the wholesalers wrote the plan themselves. Two long petitions, dated 8 December 1851 and 11 February 1854, signed

by the major Saint-Louis wholesalers and notables and led by the Maurel and Prom company of Bordeaux, formed the basis of nearly everything Faidherbe would do as governor. The naval ministry turned their demands into instructions, first to Governor Protet and then to his successor. What those instructions actually said survives, and they are the founding document of French rule in West Africa — not a proclamation of civilisation but a commercial order with a clause about force:

> *Nous devons dicter nos volontés aux chefs maures pour le commerce des gommes. Il faut supprimer les escales en 1854, employer la force si l'on ne peut rien obtenir par la persuasion. Il faut supprimer tout tribut payé par nous aux états du fleuve, sauf à donner, quand il nous plaira, quelques preuves de notre munificence aux chefs dont nous serons contents. Nous devons être les suzerains du fleuve.*

> ("We must dictate our will to the Moorish chiefs in the matter of the gum trade. The trading-stations must be suppressed in 1854, and force employed if nothing can be obtained by persuasion. All tribute paid by us to the states of the river must be suppressed, save that we may give, when it pleases us, some proofs of our munificence to the chiefs with whom we are satisfied. We must be the suzerains of the river.")

Read that against the doctrine of 1848 and the arithmetic of this study is already on the page. There is no mission in it. There is a commodity, a schedule, a threat, and a change of landlord. The plan's operative clauses required the Senegalese rulers to recognise the French as the proprietors of the Senegal river, abolished the navigation tolls, ended the coutumes, and authorised the clearing of the left bank by force if necessary. The *mission civilisatrice* is not absent because the men were cynics. It is absent because this document was not

written for the audience the mission was cut for. It was written for the men who would have to do it.

The engineer who would do it was Louis Faidherbe, who had landed at Gorée on 6 November 1852 as a sub-director of engineers, had written a report favourable to the trading houses in March 1853, had rallied the French line when it broke at Dialmath in March 1854, and was thereupon lobbied into the governorship by Maurel and Prom. The imperial decree raising him is dated 1 November 1854 in Barrows's archival account; the appointment is more commonly given as 16 December; he took the government in December, at thirty-six, having been in the colony two years.

What the people could not walk away from

Any conqueror's practical problem is that people can walk away from him. Something has to make them stay — a fortress line they cannot get behind, a harvest they cannot carry, a weapon they cannot match. In Senegal the thing that held them was water, and the plan of 1854 says so in as many words.

The plan of 1854 was a blueprint for French control of a major inland waterway that happened, incidentally, to be the only reliable dry-season source of fresh water for many of the peoples living along its banks. A few steam gunboats would easily intimidate the villages on the Senegal and its navigable tributaries; landing parties would carry the destruction a few kilometres inland on both sides. That single sentence is the whole floor. A man may abandon a village; he cannot abandon water. The river was navigable all year to Podor and seasonally to Bakel, and a chain of forts — Podor rebuilt in 1854, Médine at the foot of the Félou falls in 1855, Matam in 1857, Saldé in 1859 — turned the waterway into a corridor of guns from which no riverain population could withdraw without ceasing to be a riverain population.

The force that ran this was tiny, and the smallness is a finding rather than a footnote. In 1855 Faidherbe's regular effectives were three companies of marine infantry, a squadron of spahis, one company of artillery, a detachment of sappers under a few engineer officers, two companies of African troops, and some seven hundred volunteers from Saint-Louis; the local fleet numbered seven steam launches and an assortment of small craft, and he could draw on some forty officers at any one time. With that he conquered a kingdom. The disproportion says nothing about French valour and everything about the arithmetic facing a village headman who can see a steam launch from his fields: submit and pay, or move his people somewhere without water.

And where the water stopped, so did the conquest. Kajoor lay behind a belt of sand dunes, its heartland out of reach of the sea, its people not dependent on any river France could put a boat on. Faidherbe was forced to fight a land campaign against a powerful foe and settle for inconclusive results; failing to break Damel Macodou after three invasions in the spring of 1861, he installed a rival, Madiodio, and in 1865 annexed what was left and broke it into seven cantons — and Barrows, who worked the archives, calls the invasion of Kajoor Faidherbe's greatest failure in Senegal. The kingdom would have to be taken twenty years later, by rail.

What was done, and to whom

Waalo went first, and Waalo is the template. In February 1855 Faidherbe marched on Nder, the capital of the *lingeer* Ndaté Yalla Mbodj, who had allied with the Trarza and had ordered him out of the neighbourhood of Saint-Louis. The column's size is given differently by different sources — four hundred regulars with four hundred Saint-Louis volunteers in the French accounts, four hundred and fifty regulars with four hundred volunteers in others, eleven hundred in some Senegalese accounts, and fifteen thousand in a popular version that the colony's entire establishment could not have

furnished and that the study does not credit. On 25 February at Diouboudou the artillery opened, the Waalo-Trarza army broke, and the cavalry turned the retreat into a rout. Nder was taken and burned. The number of villages destroyed is given as twenty-five in some accounts and more than forty in others; the Waalo dead are given at over a hundred, the prisoners at 150 to 300. The study reports the range and does not split the difference; what is not in dispute is the character of the operation, which was a razzia, and which Faidherbe had learned in Algeria under Saint-Arnaud, and which he practised without embarrassment for a decade.

Waalo was annexed after being invaded and gutted, broken into cantons administered by French-appointed warrant chiefs, and in 1859 Faidherbe wrote it a constitution, in Wolof and in French, spelling out the powers of those chiefs; Waalo would serve as the model for future French annexations across West Africa. Note the order of operations: invade, gut, annex, subdivide, appoint — and only then, four years later, publish a constitution defining the lawful authority of the men you have already installed. The law does not authorise the conquest. It tidies it, afterwards, in two languages.

The pattern repeated down the coast. In 1859 Faidherbe marched eight hundred men from Dakar through Rufisque, Portudal and Joal and inland to Fatick, defeated the army of Sine at Logandème on 18 May, and burned Fatick and the villages around it; the rulers of Sine, Saloum and Bawol then signed treaties recognising French predominance. In Kajoor, Faidherbe sought ministerial authority to open hostilities in order to enforce the provisions of a treaty which, in Barrows's flat archival judgement, probably did not exist — the damel Biraima having died before signing it, and Faidherbe having claimed a deathbed declaration in its favour. Name the legal fiction as fiction: here the fiction is not a doctrine but a document, and the document is not there.

The army that was bought

Now the finding that reorganises the module, and it is the reason Senegal earns its place in this collection twice over.

France could not garrison West Africa with Frenchmen. The metropole would not pay for it, the climate killed the men it sent, and the whole plan of 1854 had been sold to Paris on the promise that it would be cheap. So the men who held the country down had to be Africans, and Faidherbe raised them three ways.

First, by booty. He encouraged the African population of the enclaves, and above all of Saint-Louis, to volunteer by promising them a generous share of whatever they took, and he used existing rivalries to raise volunteers from one people to fight its traditional enemies. Seven hundred such men marched on Waalo. They were not conscripts and they were not idealists; they were paid in the plunder of their neighbours, which is a wage the ceddo would have recognised.

Second, by purchase. On 21 July 1857, at Plombières-les-Bains, Napoleon III signed the decree creating the *tirailleurs sénégalais*. Of the five hundred tirailleurs of 1857, about a third were former slaves, the remainder men drawn from the poorest classes; their pay was fixed not by the naval scale but directly by the governor of Senegal, and Faidherbe saw in that fact the argument by which he would persuade Paris — the economic one. Until 1905 the corps continued to take in slaves bought from their local masters — the practice called *rachat*, redemption, in which a man's freedom was purchased for him and the price of it was a term of enlistment, commonly reckoned at a dozen years or more. Some sources describe the tirailleurs as free volunteers relatively well paid, better fed and better dressed than the older native companies; both are true, and the tension between them is the institution. A man bought out of slavery into a rifle company is both freed and owned, and the record should say so.

Barrows, who read Faidherbe's papers, gives the institution its exact name. What Faidherbe created, using an Algerian pattern and Senegalese material, was an elite African contingent for the French army — the governor's *thièdos*. The ceddo were the Wolof crown's warrior-slaves: men owning nothing, inheriting nothing, owing everything to the king, holding his country down for him and detested by everyone in it. Faidherbe spent a decade destroying them, and then raised the same institution under his own hand — an armed body drawn from men with no land, no lineage that counted, and nothing to bequeath, and therefore incapable of founding a family that might one day want the country for itself. Neither the damels nor the governor learned this from the other; both had the same problem, which is what to do when the men you need to arm are the men most likely to replace you. The copy was made from the corpse.

Third, by borrowing. Faidherbe placed more importance on the loan of three companies of Algerian *tirailleurs indigènes*, whose use in Kajoor in 1861 was the first deployment of native Algerian troops outside Algeria — Muslim North Africans, conquered a generation earlier, sent to conquer Muslim West Africans, for propaganda value as much as for fire.

And at the end of the story, the thing closes its own circle. On 17 November 1882 the last damel of Kajoor, Lat Dior Ngoné Latyr Diop — a man who had beaten the French at Ngol-Ngol in 1863, who had converted to Islam in exile under Maba Diakhou Ba, and who had signed and broken treaties as his strength rose and fell — wrote to Governor Servatius about the railway France proposed to drive through his kingdom to carry the groundnut crop:

> *Tant que je vivrai, sache-le bien, je m'opposerai de toutes mes forces à l'établissement de ce chemin de fer… La vue des sabres et des lances est agréable à nos yeux. C'est pourquoi chaque fois que je recevrai de toi une lettre relative au chemin de fer, je te répondrai toujours non, non, et je ne te ferai jamais d'autre réponse. Quand bien même je dormirais de mon dernier sommeil, mon cheval Malaw te ferait la réponse.*

> ("As long as I live, know it well, I shall oppose with all my strength the building of this railway… The sight of sabres and of lances is pleasing to our eyes. That is why, each time I receive from you a letter concerning the railway, I shall answer you always no, no, and I shall never give you any other answer. Even were I sleeping my last sleep, my horse Malaw would answer you.")

The French burned his residence in January 1883, deposed him, installed his nephew, and built the line: the two sections met at Kelle on 12 May 1885, and the Dakar–Saint-Louis railway was inaugurated that July. On 26 or 27 October 1886 — the date is given both ways in the Senegalese record — Lat Dior died at Dékhelé with two of his sons and some seventy-eight of his companions, killed by a column of spahis under Captain Valois, guided and supported by Demba War Sall, who had been his own *farba kaba*: the commander of his ceddo.

The last king of Kajoor was killed by his own crown-slaves, working for France. That is not a metaphor for the colonial floor. It is the colonial floor.

What the conquest of the river shows

Three things here are worth carrying out of this module, and none of them is about Faidherbe.

First: for two hundred years the French in Senegal had no coercive power of their own, and the date they acquired one is a date in a ledger. They paid *coutumes* to

the states of the river, and as late as 1850 the notables of their own capital were sent to beg peace of a Moorish emir. A power that pays rent is a tenant. What ended the tenancy was not an insult, a massacre, or a mission: it was gum revenue falling, merchant debts mounting, and a new crop that grew where France did not rule. The instruction of 1854 puts it in the ministry's own hand — dictate our will, suppress the tribute, employ force if persuasion fails, be the suzerains of the river. The useful question in front of any conquest is therefore not how it was won but **when paying stopped being cheaper than taking**, because that question dates the war and names its cause at once.

Second: the reach of a conquest can be predicted from the thing the conquered cannot walk away from. Along the Senegal that thing was water, and a handful of gunboats and river forts sufficed to hold six hundred kilometres of it. On the sand of Kajoor there was no such thing, and the same technique failed outright — three invasions in one spring, a puppet who could not hold, and a kingdom that had to wait twenty years to be taken by a railway. The conquest did not radiate outward from garrisons; it ran along a waterway and then along a rail line, and stopped precisely where the dependency stopped. **Find what the population cannot abandon and you have drawn the map of what the conqueror can hold.**

Third, and the one that matters most later: the armed force that held French Senegal was African, it was bought, and it was a reconstruction of the very institution France was destroying. Paris would not pay to garrison West Africa with French sons and the climate killed the ones it sent, so the men had to be raised locally; raised locally, they had to be raised from men with nothing — the enslaved bought out of their masters' hands, the poor, the enemies of the enemy — and paid in plunder, or in a freedom whose price was twelve years in the ranks. Faidherbe's own biographer, having read his papers, calls the result the gov-

ernor's *thièdos*. Which yields the thing to watch for. **An army of bought men is cheap, and that is why it exists; it is loyal exactly as long as the bargain it was bought on is kept.** The danger to such an order is not the peasantry rising. It is the day the men who *are* the order discover the terms have been broken — which happened, in this colony, at a transit camp outside Dakar, on the first of December 1944.

The founding legend, meanwhile, records almost none of this. Faidherbe is remembered as the *bâtisseur* — the bridge, the town plan, the schools, the lighthouse — and in his own 501-page account of his life's work, published in the year he died, he never explains how or why he created the tirailleurs sénégalais at all. The instrument by which the whole thing was actually held is missing from the builder's own book. Legibility is not pardon; but neither is the statue an account.

A note on sources. Three exact primary quotations carry this module, all public-domain and given in the original with translation. The ministerial instructions of 1854 ("*Nous devons être les suzerains du fleuve…*") are quoted as reproduced in the *Revue des deux mondes*'s contemporary review of the *Annales sénégalaises de 1854 à 1885* (the naval ministry's official compilation published under Faidherbe's direction), reproduced in turn on French Wikisource; the same passage's key clauses are independently confirmed by Leland Barrows's archival reconstruction of the "plan of 1854" from the Section d'outre-mer of the French national archives. The reply attributed to Mohammed el-Habib of the Trarza is from the same review and is used only as evidence of posture, not quoted here at length. The letter of Lat Dior to Governor Servatius of 17 November 1882 ("*mon cheval Malaw te ferait la réponse*") is reproduced consistently, with the same date and addressee, across the Senegalese historical and educational record; the original is in the Archives nationales du Sénégal, and it should be recollated against the archival text before final compilation. **One widely circulated Faidherbe quotation is deliberately not used.** The line beginning "*En dix jours, nous avions brûlé plusieurs villages riverains de la Taouey…*" and ending "*…inspiré une salutaire terreur à ces populations*" appears identically across the Senegalese press, the Survie campaign dossier, and the polemical literature, always without a cita-

tion, and its internal repetition suggests a compression of an original passage; the study could not verify it against Faidherbe's despatches, and a doubtful line is dropped rather than guessed. Faidherbe's practice of the razzia is instead established from Leland Barrows's archival study (his *Louis-Léon César Faidherbe*, in Gann and Duignan's *African Proconsuls*, 1978, and his *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* article of 1974), which is the source, paraphrased throughout, for: the composition of the colony's forces in 1855; the petitions of 8 December 1851 and 11 February 1854; the seven points of the plan of 1854 and the river as the only reliable dry-season water source; the annexation and re-constitution of Waalo as the template for later French annexations; the Kajoor treaty that probably did not exist; the characterisation of the tirailleurs sénégalais as "the governor's *thièdos*"; and the silence of *Le Sénégal* (1889) on their creation. The decree creating the tirailleurs (21 July 1857, Plombières-les-Bains) is confirmed across the French official and scholarly record; the composition of the first five hundred (about one third former slaves) follows Anthony Guyon, and the practice of *rachat* to 1905 follows Myron Echenberg, both paraphrased. Contested figures are given as ranges and not resolved: the Waalo column of February 1855 (400–450 regulars plus some 400–700 Saint-Louis volunteers; the figure of 15,000 given in the popular Senegalese press is rejected as impossible on the colony's own establishment); the villages burned in Waalo (25 to more than 40); the Waalo dead (over 100) and prisoners (150–300); Faidherbe's appointment (imperial decree of 1 November 1854 per Barrows, 16 December 1854 in most other accounts, government taken up in December); and the death of Lat Dior at Dékhelé (26 or 27 October 1886). Gum and groundnut export values for 1860 (1,875,261.50 francs against 444,828.50 francs from Saint-Louis) are Barrows's, from the colonial accounts.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

SIXTEEN A YEAR

Module 2 · the settlement — a colony that took the crop and not the acre, and drew its decisive border not between France and Africa but between four coastal towns and everywhere else, marking the inside by the accident of a birthplace and opening the door out of subjecthood, in the federation's last decades, sixteen times a year

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

Two settlements, not one

In most conquests the division of the spoils and the division of the people are the same act: those who took the land are inside, those who lost it are outside, and one line does both jobs. In Senegal there are two lines and they do not run together, and almost everything peculiar about this colony follows from that.

The money ran through a single crop and a dozen family firms, and involved almost no taking of land at all. The people were divided by a border drawn not between France and Africa but *inside the colony* — between four coastal towns and the rest of a continent — with the mark of belonging being where a man happened to have been born, and the door out of not belonging opening, in the federation's last fifteen years, about sixteen times a year.

Neither is what a reader coming from Algeria or Kenya will expect.

The wealth: the crop, and the dozen houses

Follow the money and it goes to the groundnut, and the groundnut goes to Bordeaux.

The peanut had been trickling out of Senegal since the 1830s — B. Devès and H. Maurel were shipping cargoes to Bordeaux by 1830, Maurel & Prom was founded in 1831, Maurel Frères followed in 1866 and Devès et Chaumet three years later — but the trade was still small when Faidherbe took the government. It became the colony within a generation. Maurel & Prom built a quay at Rufisque in 1865, from which 900 tonnes went out that year against 1,690 from Saint-Louis; by 1867 Rufisque was shipping 5,488 tonnes against Saint-Louis's 3,172, and the competition between the two ports was over. After the Dakar–Saint-Louis railway of 1885 and the Thiès–Kayes line that followed, the whole interior of Kajoor and Bawol and Saloum became a single machine for turning millet fields into peanut fields, and the peanut into francs at a French port.

The men who owned that machine are nameable, and their names do not change for a century. The "groupe bordelais" — Maurel & Prom, Devès et Chaumet, Buhan et Teisseire — was joined around 1870 by a second wave: Philippe Delmas, "Chéri" Peyrissac, Élie Chavanel, Louis Vézia, and after them the great chartered companies, the CFAO and the SCOA and the NOSOCO. Right down to the last colonial elections in 1954, the electoral rolls of the chambers of commerce of Saint-Louis, Gorée and Dakar show the same surnames recurring — Maurel, Prom, Chavanel, Vézia, Peyrissac, Delmas, Devès, Chaumet — forming, with the representatives of the SCOA, the CFAO and the NOSOCO and the colony's credit houses, a majority that was for practical purposes immovable in the first category of electors.

The concentration can be put in one figure. In 1946 the market capitalisation of the SCOA and the CFAO alone, on the Paris exchange, represented eighty-four per cent of all listed

corporations in French West Africa. Two firms, four fifths of the listed economy of a federation of fifteen million people.

The mechanism by which the money moved was the *traite* — the seasonal buying of the crop — and it ran on debt. The house advanced goods (cloth, rice, sugar, tools) against a harvest not yet planted; the *traitant* or, later, the company's own bush factory advanced them onward to the cultivator; the cultivator delivered his nuts at a price the house set, against a debt the house had valued. It is a closed circuit, and its closure is the point: the peasant never held money and therefore never held a choice. He was not, in the settler colonies' manner, driven off his ground. He was left standing on it, in debt, growing a crop he could not eat.

And note who else the machine ruined. The métis traitants of Saint-Louis — the *habitants*, the old creole intermediary class that had run the river for two centuries — were the first casualties of their own colony's success. The CFAO's system of *factoreries*, small collecting posts reaching far up the peanut routes, drove the Senegalese traders out of the trade, and the railway and the direct-buying houses finished what the factories began. The class that had made the conquest possible was surplus to it within thirty years of the railway it had lobbied for. A colony of this kind cannot function without middlemen — someone must stand between an administration of a few hundred Frenchmen and a million cultivators — and this one had just destroyed the middlemen it started with. It would have to find others.

The land that was declared to have no master

Now the thing that did *not* happen, which is at least as important as the thing that did.

France took the land of Senegal in law and left it alone in fact. The doctrine is stated in the decrees and it is stated in a phrase: *terres vacantes et sans maître* — vacant and masterless lands — which belong to the state. It enters Senegalese

law early: a decree of 10 April 1897 for Senegal and its dependencies already treats such lands, and therefore the forests, as the property of the state; the decree of 23 October 1904 organises the domain across French West Africa, and the decree of 24 July 1906 organises the regime of landed property — *immatriculation*, the registration of title — across the same federation; the decree of 15 November 1935, regulating domanial lands in AOF, states the principle flatly in its first article: in French West Africa, vacant and masterless lands belong to the state.

Name the legal fiction as fiction, because this one is a masterpiece of the genre. A "masterless" land is, in the Civil Code's sense, a *res nullius*, a thing no one has ever appropriated. The lands so described were held, worked, inherited, and adjudicated by lineages under the Serer *lamanic* system and its Wolof equivalents, and had been for centuries. The fiction did not describe an emptiness; it manufactured one, by declining to recognise as property anything not registered in a European register. The colonial courts eventually said so themselves, and the burden of proof was finally reversed by the decree-law of 1955, which required the administration to prove that a land was vacant before absorbing it — sixty years too late to matter, and five years before the end.

But here is the fact that governs everything downstream: **having declared the land its own, France largely did not take it.** There is no Senegalese Mitidja and no Senegalese White Highlands. There is no settler class, because there is almost no settler. In 1910 Saint-Louis held about 22,000 people, of whom some 800 were Europeans and métis; Rufisque about 12,000, of whom some 300 were Europeans; Dakar about 24,000, of whom some 2,300 were Europeans and métis. A few thousand Europeans, in the towns, in trade — against a colony of well over a million and a federation that the French census of 1936 put at 14.9 million.

Patrick Wolfe's account of settler colonialism — that the settler and the native cannot share an acre, so invasion becomes a permanent structure aimed at replacement — simply does not engage here, and it is worth being exact about why. The Frenchman did not want the acre. He wanted what grew on it, which meant he needed the Senegalese peasant alive, in his own village, on his own ground, planting in June. Everything follows from that one requirement: no dispossession, so no war of dispossession; no war of dispossession, so no need for a large army; no large army, so a colony that could be run by a few hundred administrators, a few thousand African soldiers, and a great deal of authority France did not own. Algeria took the land and fought for it for a century and a quarter. Senegal took the crop.

And in taking only the crop it preserved, without meaning to and at no cost to itself, the entire village world of the interior — the compounds, the lineages, the land tenure, the seasonal round. That world was at that moment the ground of somebody else's advance: Islam, four generations from finishing what it had begun eight centuries earlier. A settler colony destroys what it lands on. An extractive colony leaves it standing, and can discover a generation later that the thing left standing has become the only institution in the country capable of getting anything done.

The border drawn inside the colony

Now the settlement of persons, and it is the strangest border in this collection.

The line does not run between France and Africa. It runs between four towns and everywhere else. To be born in Saint-Louis, Gorée, Rufisque or Dakar was to be an *originaire*: to hold, however contestedly, the rights of a French citizen — to vote, to sit on a municipal council, to elect a deputy to the Chamber, and, decisively, to stand outside the *indigénat*. To be born four kilometres inland was to be a *sujet*.

The two worlds were made by two instruments. The first is the *indigénat* — the administrative penal regime that let a *commandant de cercle* punish a native, without trial and without appeal, for a schedule of special offences that the ordinary law did not punish at all. A decree of 30 September 1887 extended to Senegal — outside the Four Communes — the repressive powers of administrators that a decree of 25 May 1881 had established in Indochina. Daniel Rivet's description of the whole apparatus is the fairest short one: not a single code but a collage of texts of circumstance, expressing the fear of native insurrection. What it cost the people who lived under it — in days of unpaid labour, in fines, in men taken — is an accounting for later. What matters for the division of persons is only where it stopped, and it stopped at the municipal boundary of four towns.

The second instrument is the door. A subject could become a citizen — in principle. The decree of 25 May 1912 fixed the conditions on which the natives of French West Africa might accede to the quality of French citizen, and the conditions were an education, a decoration, a public office, an approved manner of life, and the abandonment of one's personal status: which is to say, for a Muslim, the abandonment of Muslim marriage and Muslim inheritance, and thus of one's family and one's standing in it. Very few walked through a door with that price on it, and the administration made sure of it. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, working the naturalisation dossiers, produces the figure this module is named for: between 1935 and 1949, naturalisation policy in French West Africa was so restrictive that no more than sixteen individuals a year were granted French citizenship — an average of about seventeen a year, roughly half of them from the Senegalese districts outside the Four Communes.

Sixteen a year. In a federation of fifteen million. At that rate, admitting the population of French West Africa to the citizenship of the Republic whose creed said the human family ad-

mitted no distinctions would have taken something on the order of a million years.

And the exception on the other side of the line was real, which is what makes it worth this much care. The originaires' citizenship was not a paper courtesy. The commune elections were held on universal male suffrage, in a single college, and the natives enjoyed the full right of suffrage without renouncing their personal status — a combination that existed nowhere else in the French empire. Galandou Diouf was elected to the colony's general council for Rufisque in 1907; Blaise Diagne took the deputy's seat in 1914; and the law of 29 September 1916, which Diagne carried, settled the matter in words the courts would spend two decades arguing about: the originaires of the communes of full exercise and their descendants *sont et demeurent citoyens français* — "are and remain French citizens." What that citizenship was worth, what it cost, and what its holders did with it is a long story and belongs where the votes are counted.

What belongs here is the shape of the line. The mark of being inside is not blood: the originaire could be as African as any subject, and Blaise Diagne, born at Gorée to a Lebu cook and a Manjack mother, was. It is not creed: he kept his Muslim marriage and his Muslim inheritance, and the courts upheld him. It is not schooling and it is not money. It is a *place of birth* — and it descends, because the law of 1916 says the originaires *and their descendants*. Four municipal boundaries drawn on a coast for reasons of trade, two centuries earlier, had become the frontier of a hereditary caste, inside a Republic whose founding text held that the human family admitted no distinctions at all.

The men who were paid to hold it

Between the two settlements stood the chiefs, and the chiefs are where the coalition becomes visible.

The precolonial *damel* had been elected by a council of nobles and held a floor of his own. His colonial successor was an employee. The canton became the basic administrative unit and the space of "native command"; the chefs de canton were the transmission belt of colonial authority at the local level, and their status was never clearly defined across the whole colonial period, being fixed only slowly and imperfectly through local texts and the circulars of successive governors-general — William Ponty in 1909, Van Vollenhoven in 1917, Brévié in 1932 and 1937. They collected the tax, they furnished the labour, they delivered the men. They were paid.

And they were, on the administration's own account, chosen for compliance and not competence. A colonial political report of the late 1920s, describing Senegal, records the establishment: of the nineteen chefs de province the colony counted, only three were educated and understood and spoke a little French; of the 435 chefs de canton, barely two or three understood and spoke French — and as for giving the chiefs themselves any instruction, the difficulties were held to be too considerable to contemplate. Read that against the language of the civilising mission and the distance is the study's whole method: the men through whom France governed nine tenths of Senegal were men France had decided not to civilise, because a chief who could read the Republic's own law would be a chief who could quote it.

The coalition wrote itself down in 1920, and the text is the settlement's constitution. When the colony was formally extended to take in the protectorate lands, the elected general council was replaced by a *conseil colonial*, and the right of suffrage was not extended to the native subjects of those lands, who were instead "represented" by chiefs of territory or of canton. Article 20 of the decree of 4 December 1920 says who may sit for them:

> *Ne peuvent être choisis en qualité de représentants des chefs indigènes au conseil colonial que les chefs de province ou de canton officiellement nommés à ces emplois par le lieutenant-gouverneur, exerçant leurs fonctions dans la circonscription où ils ont été désignés et sachant parler couramment le français.*

> ("No persons may be chosen as representatives of the native chiefs on the colonial council except chiefs of province or of canton officially appointed to those posts by the lieutenant-governor, exercising their functions in the district in which they have been designated, and speaking French fluently.")

The subjects of Senegal were represented, in the colony's own assembly, by men appointed to represent them by the governor whose administration they were to check — and, by the terms of the same article, only by such of those men as could speak the governor's language, which was two or three of four hundred and thirty-five. That is not a flaw in the instrument. That *is* the instrument, and it is stated in the Journal officiel, in the plainest French, where anyone might have read it.

So the men who ran colonial Senegal can be listed, and the list is short. The guns: an administration of a few hundred Frenchmen and an army of bought Africans. The money: a dozen Bordeaux and Marseille family houses and, behind them, two chartered companies holding four fifths of the federation's listed capital. The story, told at Paris, that all this was a work of civilisation. And running between them and the million people who actually grew the crop, a salaried chieftaincy, appointed by the governor, kept illiterate on purpose, and seated in the colony's own council by that same governor's pen. Whatever bargain those parties had struck among themselves, they were confident enough of it to publish it in the *Journal officiel*.

What the division actually divided

Three findings, and the first two run against what the other colonies in this collection would lead one to expect.

First: a conquest can divide the spoils without dividing the land, and when it does, nearly everything downstream changes. France declared every unregistered acre in Senegal vacant and masterless, took title to the lot, and then left the cultivator standing on his ground. What it actually took was a crop and the credit chain that priced it. The absence of a land grab is not a mildness; it is a choice with consequences that run the length of the colony's life. No dispossession, so no war of dispossession. No settlers worth the name — a few hundred Europeans in Saint-Louis, a couple of thousand in Dakar — so no settler politics and no settler veto. And no need for the kind of army that holds down men who have been made landless. **The first question to ask of any conquest is therefore what it came for: the ground, or what grows on it.** A power that wants the ground must remove the people. A power that wants the harvest must keep them — alive, in place, and in working order — and will therefore leave intact, without spending a franc on it, whatever village society already has them organised. That is not kindness. It is the cheapest arrangement available, and it decides what the colony can and cannot later do.

Second: the line between citizen and subject was drawn by geography, and geography is the one marker that needs no argument behind it. Draw the line by race and you must state a doctrine of racial hierarchy — which a Republic founded on the unity of the human family could not say cleanly in its own voice. Draw it by education or property and you have built a door, and a door creates a standing demand to widen it. Draw it by birthplace and there is nothing to justify: the line simply lies where trade happened to put it in the seventeenth century. It let France maintain two propositions at once, in perfect public consistency — that an

African could be a full citizen of the Republic, here is one, elected, sitting in the Chamber; and that essentially no African would become one, because essentially none had been born inside four municipal boundaries on the coast. **Read any such boundary for what it saves the rulers from having to argue.** The exhibit and the exclusion were never in tension. The exhibit is what made the exclusion sayable. And the spending confirms which audience mattered: France paid real money and real political capital for the enclave's citizenship — a deputy in Paris, a single-college franchise, a Muslim personal status preserved against its own Civil Code — and would not pay to widen it beyond sixteen men a year.

Third: the colony destroyed the middlemen it began with, and would have to replace them. The métis *traitants* of Saint-Louis were indispensable to the conquest — they knew the river, they carried the credit, they furnished the volunteers who burned Nder, they had given the town a mayor in 1778 and France a deputy in 1848. Within thirty years of the railway they had been squeezed out of the groundnut trade by the bush factories and direct-buying houses they had helped bring in. Nothing had replaced them, and something had to: a few hundred administrators cannot reach a million cultivators without an intermediary who is already trusted and already obeyed. When that vacancy came to be filled, the only serious candidate in the country was a Sufi order whose founder was at that moment in colonial exile.

A note on sources. Two exact primary quotations carry this module, both public-domain and given in the original with translation. Article 20 of the decree of 4 December 1920 reorganising the administration of Senegal and creating its colonial council ("*Ne peuvent être choisis en qualité de représentants des chefs indigènes…*") is quoted as reproduced in the Digithèque MJP (Université de Perpignan) from the *Journal officiel*; the operative words of the law of 29 September 1916 ("*sont et demeurent citoyens français*") are quoted in the short form only, be-

cause the full text will be collated against the *Journal officiel* of 1 October 1916 when the franchise is examined in full (the wording circulates in two variants, "natifs" and "originaires," and the study will settle which before compiling). The legal term of art *terres vacantes et sans maître* is quoted as a term, not as a sentence; the domanial chain (decree of 10 April 1897 for Senegal; decree of 23 October 1904 organising the domain in AOF; decree of 24 July 1906 on landed property and *immatriculation*; decree of 15 November 1935 restating that vacant and masterless lands belong to the state; the decree-law of 20 May 1955 reversing the burden of proof) follows the standard francophone land-law literature and is paraphrased. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The commercial history — the Bordeaux group (Maurel & Prom, Devès et Chaumet, Buhan et Teisseire), the second wave of the 1870s (Delmas, Peyrissac, Chavanel, Vézia), the *traite* and its credit chain, and the Rufisque and Saint-Louis groundnut tonnages of 1865 and 1867 — follows Pierre Guillard on Peyrissac, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch on the trading companies, and the standard economic histories. The figure that the SCOA and the CFAO together represented some 84 per cent of the Paris market capitalisation of all listed French West African corporations in 1946 is Dresch's, of 1946, as reported in the recent literature on colonial finance, and is given as reported. The *indigénat* in Senegal (decree of 30 September 1887, extending the Indochinese decree of 25 May 1881, and applying outside the Four Communes) and Daniel Rivet's characterisation of the regime as a collage of texts of circumstance are taken from the standard accounts and are developed where the costs are counted. The decree of 25 May 1912 fixing the conditions of accession to citizenship in AOF is confirmed against Légifrance's record of the *Journal officiel*, but its article-by-article conditions are given here from the secondary literature rather than quoted, the digitised text not being machine-readable; they will be quoted exactly alongside the franchise if the text can be collated. **The module's title figure is contested only in the second decimal and is reported both ways:** Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch's study of the AOF naturalisation dossiers gives no more than sixteen individuals granted French citizenship each year between 1935 and 1949 in one formulation and an average of seventeen in another, roughly half from the Senegalese districts outside the Four Communes; both are given. The urban populations of 1910 (Saint-Louis about 22,000, of whom some 800 Europeans and métis; Rufisque about 12,000, of whom some 300 Europeans; Dakar about 24,000, of whom some 2,300 Europeans and métis) are as reproduced in the Digithèque MJP's Senegal dossier. The population of French West Africa (14.9 million) is the French imperial census of 1936. The Senegalese chieftaincy establishment (19 chefs de province, 435 chefs de canton, of whom two or three spoke French) is from a colonial political report of the late

1920s as reproduced in the *Éducation, citoyenneté et colonies* source collection, and the general account of the chefferie as the transmission belt of colonial authority follows Babacar Fall's work on forced labour in Senegal, paraphrased.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

THIRTY-THREE MILLION TICKETS

Module 3 · the story told about the conquest — announced in the Chamber and demolished there two days later, sold to eight million visitors in a Paris wood, and preached in Senegal itself to almost nobody except the men being recruited to hold the place down

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

Said out loud, in the Chamber, and answered

The justification of the French empire was not a secret doctrine, smuggled into the colonies and hidden from the metropole. It was stated from the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies, on the record, in the plainest available French, by a former prime minister — and it was heckled while he said it.

On 28 July 1885, during a debate on credits for Madagascar, Jules Ferry set out the case for colonial expansion under three heads: economic, humanitarian, political. It is the second that has survived him. The *Journal officiel*'s verbatim record gives the exchange with the interruptions intact:

> *M. Jules Ferry. Messieurs, il faut parler plus haut et plus vrai ! il faut dire ouvertement qu'en effet les races supérieures ont un droit vis-à-vis des races inférieures… (Rumeurs sur plusieurs bancs à l'extrême gauche.) Je répète qu'il y a pour les races supérieures un droit, parce qu'il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures…*

> *M. Joseph Fabre. C'est excessif ! Vous aboutissez ainsi à l'abdication des principes de 1789 et de 1848…*

> ("Ferry: Gentlemen, we must speak louder and truer! We must say openly that the superior races do indeed have a right over the inferior races… I repeat that the superior races have a right, because they have a duty. They have the duty of civilising the inferior races…

> Fabre: This is monstrous! You end this way in the abdication of the principles of 1789 and of 1848…")

Fabre's interjection is worth as much as Ferry's argument, because it identifies, in the moment and in the room, exactly what the doctrine costs. The Republic's own founding claim was that the human family admits of no ranks. Ferry has just told the Chamber that it admits of at least two, and that the upper one has rights over the lower. A deputy said so aloud while he was saying it.

Two days later Georges Clemenceau rose to answer, and the answer was total:

> *Races supérieures ! Races inférieures ! … Non, il n'y a pas de droit des nations dites supérieures contre les nations inférieures. Il y a la lutte pour la vie qui est une nécessité fatale, qu'à mesure que nous nous élevons dans la civilisation nous devons contenir dans les limites de la justice et du droit. Mais n'essayons pas de revêtir la violence du nom hypocrite de civilisation. Ne parlons pas de droit, de devoir.*

> ("Superior races! Inferior races! … No, there is no right of the so-called superior nations against the inferior nations. There is the struggle for existence, which is a fatal necessity, and which, as we rise in civilisation, we must hold within the limits of justice and of law. But let us not try to dress up violence in the hypocritical name of civilisation. Let us not speak of right, of duty.")

Hold that exchange still for a moment, because it settles something about how this kind of story works. The case for empire was not believed for lack of a rebuttal. The rebuttal was made immediately, by a first-rank politician, in the same chamber, in terms nobody has improved on since — *do not dress up violence in the hypocritical name of civilisation* — and it was printed in the *Journal officiel* where any literate Frenchman could read it. The doctrine went on to organise sixty years of policy anyway. Whatever made it durable, it was not that the argument against it had failed to occur to anyone.

The exhibit France already owned

Every empire of the period had a version of this story. What Senegal gave France was the thing none of the others could supply: a specimen.

The proposition of French colonial doctrine, in its assimilationist form, was that the difference between a Frenchman and an African was not a matter of nature but of culture, and that culture could be transmitted — that a man given the language, the law and the schooling of France would become, in the fullest sense the Republic recognised, French. It was a genuinely more generous proposition than the alternatives on offer in London or Berlin, and a great many Frenchmen believed it sincerely. It also had the useful property of being unfalsifiable in most of the empire, since almost nowhere was the transmission actually attempted.

Senegal was the exception, and had been since before the conquest. The four coastal communes had produced, over two centuries of trade and intermarriage, a French-speaking, French-educated, French-voting African and métis society; and after 1848 that society elected deputies to Paris. So when a French politician needed to demonstrate that the doctrine was not a fraud, he had somewhere to point. From May 1914 he could point at a person: Blaise Diagne, born at

Gorée in 1872 to a Lebu cook and a Manjack mother, adopted by a Christian métis family, educated in France, a career customs officer across half the empire, elected deputy for the Four Communes and taking his seat in the Palais-Bourbon — the first Black African to sit there.

The exhibit did what exhibits do. It permitted the doctrine to be stated as a description rather than an aspiration, and it did so at negligible cost, because — as the naturalisation registers show with a clarity that admits no argument — the door behind Diagne stayed shut. Between 1935 and 1949 the whole of French West Africa produced no more than sixteen or seventeen new French citizens a year out of fifteen million people. The proof of assimilation and the near-total absence of assimilation were the same policy, and there is no contradiction between them once one sees what the proof was for. A specimen does not need to be numerous. It needs to exist, and to be visible in Paris.

What the specimen was needed for

The story acquired a second and much harder function around 1910, and here the arithmetic underneath it becomes visible without any digging at all, because the man who did the arithmetic published it as a book.

Charles Mangin, a colonial officer who had served in West Africa and would command an army in the coming war, argued in *La Force noire* (1910) that France's central strategic problem — a population smaller than Germany's, and falling further behind each decade — had a solution in Africa. West Africa, on his account, was a reservoir of men: not metaphorically, but as a matter of recruitable manpower to be drawn on when the European war came. He praised the African soldier in terms that read, today, as a compliment with a receipt attached — hardiness, endurance, tenacity, a fighting instinct, an absence of nervousness, and "une incomparable puissance de choc", an incomparable power of

shock. Which is to say: excellent assault infantry, and available in quantity.

The book was a campaign, not a treatise. Mangin lobbied the general staff and the parliament, and the colonial press carried him — *Le Petit Journal*, *Le Matin*, *Le Temps*, *Le Journal* — with Jaurès's *L'Humanité* the one great daily to oppose him firmly. On 14 July 1913, at Longchamp, the flag of the 1st Regiment of Senegalese Tirailleurs received the Légion d'honneur in front of the crowd. Fourteen months later the war began.

And then the specimen and the reservoir were joined in a single person. In January 1918, with the recruiting drives of 1915 and 1916 having provoked revolt across French West Africa, Clemenceau — the same Clemenceau — appointed Blaise Diagne commissioner of the Republic in West Africa, and sent the Chamber's only Black deputy to raise the men his own administration could no longer raise by force. Diagne travelled the federation from Bamako by the Dakar–Niger railway, cabling his despatches to the ministry of colonies. He did it, on his own account and by every subsequent one, as a bargain: Africans would give France the same duties as citizens, and would in return be given the same rights.

That bargain is the hinge of the entire colonial story in Senegal, and it is worth being exact about its status. Diagne was not a dupe. He had already carried, in September 1916, the law that made the originaires of the four communes and their descendants French citizens outright, and he had done it by trading precisely this coin — the willingness of his constituents to be conscripted like any other Frenchman. He understood the exchange he was proposing better than most of the men he was proposing it to, and he extracted from it a real and durable legal gain for the people he represented. What he could not do was make the Republic honour the

same exchange with the men he recruited *outside* the four communes, who gave the duties and received nothing.

The wartime totals are given differently by different authorities and the study will not pretend to precision it does not have: on the order of two hundred thousand West Africans served France in the First World War, with dead commonly reckoned at around thirty thousand, and Diagne's 1918 mission alone is usually credited with tens of thousands of recruits. The orders of magnitude are not in dispute, and they are the point. The story about civilisation had, by 1918, become a mechanism for extracting infantry.

Meanwhile the domestic version of the tirailleur was being manufactured in a register that has aged worse than anything else in this module. From 1915 the breakfast-drink advertisement showing a grinning Senegalese soldier in a chéchia, captioned in a mock-pidgin that would become one of the most reproduced phrases in France, put the African soldier on every grocer's shelf as a figure of harmless comic devotion. The men in the trenches were being described, in the same country and at the same moment, as an incomparable power of shock and as a smiling child. Neither description required knowing anything about them, which was the convenience of both.

Thirty-three million tickets

The story reached its physical maximum on 6 May 1931, when the president of the Republic opened the Colonial Exposition in the Bois de Vincennes.

It was enormous: a hundred and ten hectares of pavilions, a full-scale reconstruction of Angkor Wat, "the tour of the world in a day" as the slogan had it, and a permanent museum of the colonies built to outlast it. The minister of colonies, Paul Reynaud, gave the inaugural address, broadcast by radio to the colonies themselves, and stated the purpose without ornament: the Exposition was to *donner aux*

Français conscience de leur empire — "to give the French an awareness of their empire" — and, he added, *il faut que chacun de nous se sente citoyen de la Grande France*, each of us must feel himself a citizen of Greater France. He opened with the proposition that colonisation was the greatest fact in history.

Read the stated purpose again, because it is the whole of this module in one clause. The exposition was not built to persuade Africans of anything. It was built to give *the French* an awareness of an empire that had by then existed for eighty years and that most of them had never thought about. The audience is named by the minister, in his own inaugural speech, in the plainest terms available.

The audience turned up. Thirty-three million tickets were sold — perhaps eight million individual visitors, on the usual estimate of four or five tickets each, roughly four million Parisians, three million from the provinces and a million foreigners. The delegate general, Marcel Olivier, gave his verdict in November: in six months the colonial idea had gained more ground than it had gained in fifty years.

And now set beside it the other exhibition. The Communist Party and the CGTU, with the surrealists and a number of independent anti-colonial militants, mounted a counter-exposition in an old pavilion near the Buttes-Chaumont, called *La Vérité sur les colonies* — "the truth about the colonies." Among those involved were a young Vietnamese who would later be called Ho Chi Minh and the Algerian Hadj Ali Abdelkader. It opened in the second half of September, four and a half months late, and ran into February. The prefecture of police counted its visitors over eight months at 4,226.

Thirty-three million tickets against four thousand two hundred and twenty-six visitors. The refutation was available; it had been available since Clemenceau in 1885; it was, in 1931, standing open in the same city, free of the reconstructed temples and the imported "native villages," some three

miles from the main gates. Almost nobody went. A story of this kind does not survive by defeating its critics. It survives by being the only version most people ever encounter, and by being pleasant, and by being large.

What was said in Senegal

Now cross to the other end and ask what the people actually being governed were told. The answer is startlingly little — and where the administration spoke to itself about the matter, it said the opposite of what was being said at Vincennes.

The public doctrine held that France governed Africa through its own traditional authorities, respecting the customs and the hierarchies it found. The internal instruction is the circular of the governor-general Joost van Vollenhoven, dated 15 August 1917 and published in the *Journal officiel de l'Afrique occidentale française* of 18 August. On the powers of the chiefs it is unambiguous:

> *Ils n'ont aucun pouvoir propre d'aucune espèce, car il n'y a pas deux autorités dans le cercle, l'autorité française et l'autorité indigène ; il n'y en a qu'une. Seul le commandant de cercle commande ; seul il est responsable. Le chef indigène n'est qu'un instrument, un auxiliaire.*

> ("They have no power of their own of any kind, for there are not two authorities in the district, the French authority and the native authority; there is only one. The commandant of the district alone commands; he alone is responsible. The native chief is only an instrument, an auxiliary.")

A colonial inspector named Maret put it, in a report of 1930, more bluntly still: the canton chief is not the continuator of the old native kinglet; even where the same man holds both, nothing survives from the one state of affairs into the other; and though he be the descendant of the very king with whom France signed its treaty, he holds no power of his own, being

appointed at France's discretion and being — the report's own phrasing, repeated for emphasis — only our auxiliary.

Set that beside the pavilions. In Paris the empire is a partnership of civilisations under French tutelage, with each protectorate's architecture reproduced in plaster on the edge of a boating lake. In Dakar the governor-general instructs his lieutenant-governors that the African authority does not exist, that the only authority is French, and that the visible chief is an instrument. Both documents are official. Both were published. Neither was hidden. They simply had different readerships four thousand kilometres apart, and no one in either readership had much occasion to hold them up side by side.

As for the peasantry, the striking fact is the near-absence of any attempt to convert them to anything. There was no serious effort to make the Wolof cultivator a Frenchman, or a Catholic, or a believer in the Republic — and the administration's own reports say why, in the flattest managerial terms: of the nineteen provincial chiefs in Senegal in the late 1920s, three had any education and could manage a little French; of the 435 canton chiefs, two or three could speak it at all; and the difficulties of instructing the chiefs themselves were held to be too considerable to be worth attempting. The men through whom France ruled nine-tenths of the country were men France had specifically decided not to educate. A story about bringing civilisation, told by an administration that has calculated the cost of teaching its own chiefs to read and declined to pay it.

There is one enormous exception, and it is the exception that eventually breaks the colony. The doctrine *was* preached, fully and repeatedly and with every appearance of sincerity, to one group of Africans: the soldiers. They were told they were fighting for France, that they were of France, that duties honoured would be met with rights conceded — told it by recruiting officers, told it by their own deputy on his mis-

sion of 1918, told it in the citations pinned to their regimental flags. It was the one place in the whole colony where France spent real effort persuading Africans of anything, and the reason is not obscure. A cultivator's opinion of the Republic was of no consequence to anybody: he was held in place by his debt at the trading post, by the tax, by the chief. But an army that does not believe the bargain it was recruited on is worth nothing, and may be worth less than nothing. Belief was cultivated exactly where belief was load-bearing, and nowhere else.

Which locates, with some precision, where the whole structure was liable to fail. Not in the villages, where nothing had been promised. In the ranks, where everything had.

What the story was for

Three things follow from the shape of this story, and they are not the things a reader of the pavilions and the speeches would expect.

The first is that the story was aimed at France. This is not an inference; it is Reynaud's stated purpose, given from the podium and broadcast on the radio — to give the French an awareness of their empire. It could hardly be otherwise, because it was the French who had to be persuaded. They were the ones voting the credits, floating the loans, sending their sons to die of fever in Kayes and their capital to Maurel and Prom, and — after 1914 — accepting that the infantry replacing their own dead would be African. The conquered did not need to be persuaded of anything, because nothing was being asked of them that persuasion could obtain: they were held by a debt they could not clear, a tax they had to pay in coin they could only get by growing groundnuts, and a chief appointed to collect it. **Where the ruled are held by material dependency, the ruler's story is not for them. It is for whoever is being asked to pay.** Follow the story to its

audience and you have found the people whose refusal would actually stop the thing.

The second is that the argument was won by volume, not by reason. The case against the empire was made completely and early — by Clemenceau in 1885, in terms that concede nothing and have needed no revision — and it lost anyway. In 1931 it was still available, standing open in Paris, three miles from the Exposition's gates, and it was seen by four thousand two hundred and twenty-six people while thirty-three million tickets were sold to the other thing. **A story of this kind does not need to defeat its refutation; it needs only to be larger, easier and more pleasant than the refutation, and to be the version that people encounter by default.** The lesson is uncomfortable in a way that flatters no one, because it means the presence of a free press, an open parliament and a vigorous opposition is fully compatible with a national self-understanding that is false in its central claim. Everything was said. Almost nobody listened. Both facts are in the record.

The third is the one that matters most for what comes later: the story was preached to Africans at exactly one point, and that point is where the order eventually detonates. France did not try to make Wolof peasants into Frenchmen; the administration's own reports show it declining, on grounds of cost, even to educate the chiefs it governed through. But it did tell the tirailleurs, over and over, that they were of France and that their service would be answered in kind — because an army recruited on a lie fights like an army recruited on a lie. **A ruling order preaches its story precisely where it needs somebody's genuine consent, and stays silent where force and debt will do the work.** So the danger to such an order does not come from the people who were told nothing and therefore expect nothing. It comes from the one group that was told everything: men who had been given the doctrine in full because their

belief was needed, who had fought on the strength of it, and who would one day come home and present the bill.

They presented it at a transit camp called Thiaroye, eight miles from Dakar, on the first of December 1944, and the answer they received was given with machine guns.

A note on sources. Five exact primary quotations carry this module, all public-domain, given in the original with translation, and each verified against a text reproducing the original record. Jules Ferry's speech of 28 July 1885 ("*les races supérieures ont un droit vis-à-vis des races inférieures… Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures*"), together with Joseph Fabre's interruption ("*C'est excessif ! Vous aboutissez ainsi à l'abdication des principes de 1789 et de 1848*"), is quoted from the Assemblée nationale's own published transcription of the *Journal officiel de la République française, Débats parlementaires, Chambre des députés, compte rendu in extenso*, cross-checked against the reproduction held by the Université catholique de Louvain. Georges Clemenceau's reply of 30 July 1885 ("*n'essayons pas de revêtir la violence du nom hypocrite de civilisation*") is quoted from the same debate as reproduced in several independent French collections; the study notes that it has not been collated against the *Journal officiel* itself and flags it for re-verification before compilation, the wording being stable across all reproductions consulted. Joost van Vollenhoven's circular of 15 August 1917 on the native chiefs ("*il n'y a pas deux autorités dans le cercle… il n'y en a qu'une*") is quoted with its archival citation as given in the francophone legal literature: *Journal officiel de l'AOF*, no. 633 of 18 August 1917, p. 466. Paul Reynaud's inaugural address of 6 May 1931 ("*donner aux Français conscience de leur empire*") is quoted in the short form from its retransmission in *La Dépêche coloniale* of 7 May 1931; the accompanying phrases — that each Frenchman must feel himself a citizen of Greater France, and that colonisation is the greatest fact in history — are given from reproductions of the same speech and are quoted only in translation where the original wording could not be fixed with certainty. Marcel Olivier's verdict of November 1931 is paraphrased from Alain Ruscio's reproduction. Charles Mangin's *La Force noire* (1910) is public domain, but the study quotes from it only the three words "*incomparable puissance de choc*", which recur identically across the secondary literature; the longer catalogue of soldierly qualities is paraphrased rather than quoted, the full sentence not having been collated against the 1910 Hachette text, and it should be checked against the Gallica scan before

compilation. The colonial inspector Maret's report of 1930 is paraphrased rather than quoted for the same reason. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Contested or approximate figures are given as such: the Exposition coloniale of 1931 sold 33 million tickets to an estimated 8 million individual visitors (roughly 4 million Parisians, 3 million from the provinces, 1 million foreigners), a distribution which is itself an estimate; the counter-exposition *La Vérité sur les colonies* opened on 19 September in some accounts and 23 September in others, and its attendance is given as 4,226 by the prefecture of police and as about 5,000 by the Ligue contre l'impérialisme's own executive committee in January 1932; **the totals of West African war service are given deliberately loosely** — on the order of 200,000 serving in the First World War with dead commonly reckoned near 30,000, and Diagne's 1918 mission usually credited with tens of thousands of recruits — because the precise figures circulating (63,000 is the commonest for the 1918 mission) could not be verified against the primary record here and will be given as a range, with its historiography, where the costs of the colony are counted in full. Blaise Diagne's parentage, birth at Gorée on 13 October 1872, election of 10 May 1914 and appointment as commissioner of the Republic in West Africa in January 1918 follow the standard biographical record and the Archives nationales' documentation of the 1918 mission. The Senegalese chieftaincy establishment of the late 1920s (19 provincial chiefs, 435 canton chiefs, two or three of whom spoke French) is from a colonial political report reproduced in the *Éducation, citoyenneté et colonies* source collection. The breakfast-drink advertisement of 1915 is described but its slogan is not reproduced, being a trademark still in commercial use.

TIRAILLEUR Y EN A BON, LUI TOUJOURS OBÉIR

Module 4 · formation — what France taught, to whom, and how far; a school built to hold the sons of chiefs, a language printed for soldiers with the political thoughts engineered out of it, and a countryside left to the one institution that was still willing to teach anybody anything

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The school with the honest name

The first school the French built in the Senegalese interior was called the *école des otages* — the school of hostages — and for sixteen years nobody thought to give it a better name.

Faidherbe founded it at Saint-Louis in 1855, in his first year as governor, and its purpose was exactly what the name says: the sons of chiefs and notables were taken in, educated in French, and held. The boys were surety for their fathers' conduct and raw material for the interpreters and clerks the administration would need. In January 1856 Faidherbe wrote to the minister explaining why these particular children required a separate establishment from the mission schools, and the letter — held in the overseas archives and quoted in the Senegalese educational literature — is disarming about what he was doing: it was necessary, as far as possible, that these children should take an affection for the French, and that their instruction should be pushed faster than it could be in a school with a great many pupils, where, not being Christians, they were viewed with disfavour.

Read the sentence for what it concedes. The boys are to be made fond of France — that is the object, stated first. Their education is to be accelerated, not for their sake but because they are wanted. And the reason for segregating them is that in the ordinary schools their Islam made them unwelcome. Faidherbe is not describing a civilising mission. He is describing an investment in a small number of specific people who will be needed later, and taking care that the investment is not spoiled.

The school closed in 1871 and reopened in the 1890s under a title that had learned some manners — the *École des fils de chefs et des interprètes*, the school of chiefs' sons and interpreters. Its later descendants became the pride of French West African education: a teacher-training school at Saint-Louis from 1903, moved to Gorée in 1913, renamed in 1915 for the dead governor-general William Ponty, and eventually the federation's single most prestigious institution, producing the schoolmasters, clerks, medical assistants and — in due course — the politicians of eight colonies.

The William Ponty school was genuinely excellent and its graduates genuinely formidable, and it is important not to sneer at it. It is also important to notice its size. One school, for a federation of fifteen million people, admitting a few dozen a year. The summit of the entire educational apparatus of French West Africa was an institution whose annual intake would not have filled a Paris lycée's entrance hall.

And note who was sent. The chiefs, ordered to surrender their sons, frequently sent slaves' children instead — a substitution that says everything about how the offer was understood at the receiving end, and that produced, over decades, one of the stranger social inversions of the colonial period, as the descendants of the sent-instead rose through an administration their masters' families had declined to enter.

The language they printed

The most revealing document in this module is not a school report. It is a thirty-five-page pamphlet published in 1916 by the Imprimerie-Librairie Militaire Universelle, at 264 boulevard Saint-Germain, an address the title page identifies with some pride as being *en face le Ministère de la Guerre* — opposite the Ministry of War. It is anonymous. It is called *Le français tel que le parlent nos tirailleurs sénégalais*: French as our Senegalese riflemen speak it.

It is a grammar. Not a grammar of French — a grammar of the broken French that had grown up between European instructors and African soldiers, which the army called *petit nègre* and which the pamphlet proposes to standardise, codify and teach to the officers, so that they can speak it back. Its stated purpose is set out in the preliminaries:

> *Nous allons essayer de dégager ces règles ; leur connaissance facilitera la tache des nombreux gradés européens versés dans les troupes noires, leur permettra de se faire comprendre en peu de temps de leurs hommes, de donner à leurs théories une forme intelligible pour tous et d'intensifier ainsi la marche de l'instruction.*

> ("We shall attempt to set out these rules; knowing them will ease the task of the many European non-commissioned officers posted to the black troops, will let them make themselves understood by their men in a short time, will give their lessons a form intelligible to all, and will thereby speed the progress of instruction.")

Two governing rules follow. Always designate the same object or express the same idea by the same word. And *donner toujours à la phrase française la forme très simple qu'a la phrase dans tous les dialectes primitifs de notre Afrique Occidentale* — always give the French sentence the very simple form the sentence has in all the primitive dialects of our West Africa.

What follows is a systematic dismantling. Articles are abolished, on the ground that West African languages have none. Grammatical gender is abolished; everything inanimate becomes masculine, so that *ma maison* becomes *mon case*. Where a feminine animate is required, one appends the word for woman, on the Bambara model, so that a mare is *cheval-femme* and a bitch is *chien-femme*. Nouns are always singular. Verbs are always in the infinitive, tense being conveyed by adding a time-word before or after — *moi y a parti hier*, and for the future, *encore deux jours toi partir*. The verb *to be* is deleted entirely and replaced by *y a*. Prepositions and conjunctions are dispensed with, since, the pamphlet observes, the native dialects have few.

And then, in the section on adjectives, the manual chooses an example to demonstrate the rule. It could have chosen anything. It chose this:

> *Le bon tirailleur obéit toujours*, se dira : **Tirailleur y en a bon, lui toujours obéir.**

> *Le mauvais tirailleur désobéit*, se dira : **Tirailleur y en a pas bon, lui pas obéir.**

> ("*The good rifleman always obeys* is to be said: rifleman there is good, him always obey.

> *The bad rifleman disobeys* is to be said: rifleman there is not good, him not obey.")

That is the model sentence of the French army's official pidgin, printed opposite the Ministry of War in the third year of the Great War. A grammar has to illustrate its rules with something, and this one illustrates the adjective with a definition of a good soldier as one who always obeys and a bad one as one who does not.

Elsewhere the vocabulary section does something even more efficient. The verb *gagner*, to win or to get, is offered as the

general-purpose auxiliary for things that happen to a man, and the manual gives its examples in a single run: *moi y a gagné caporal* — I have been made a corporal; *lui y a gagné mort* — he is dead; *moi y a gagné blessé* — I have been wounded. Promotion, death and wounding, in one paradigm, governed by one verb, in a language with no tenses. It is difficult to imagine a more exact vocabulary for the life the men were being recruited into, and no one designed it to be one.

Then comes the instruction that settles what the whole exercise was for. Teaching the men the names of objects, the pamphlet warns, must not be delegated:

> *On évitera de faire faire ces théories de français par des gradés indigènes, car ces derniers en apprenant les mots leur ont déjà fait subir une déformation qu'il serait déplorable de laisser s'accentuer par une succession de transmissions défectueuses.*

> ("One will avoid having these French lessons given by native NCOs, since in learning the words these men have already subjected them to a deformation which it would be deplorable to allow to worsen through a succession of faulty transmissions.")

Hold the two halves of that together, because the contradiction is the whole module in miniature. The pamphlet exists to codify a deformed French and press it on the troops. And it forbids African NCOs from teaching French, on the ground that they would deform it. The army's objection is not to deformation. It is to deformation it does not control.

There is a further gain, and the scholarship is direct about it: a European officer who can speak *français tirailleur* does not need an interpreter, and French officers were persistently suspicious of interpreters — of the African NCOs and of the missionaries recruited for the work alike. Mangin went so far as to call the White Fathers who refused to put on uniform while interpreting harmful foreign agents. A language of

command that runs directly from the officer's mouth to the soldier's ear, with no African standing in the middle who understands both sides, is worth a good deal to a man commanding troops whose language he does not speak.

What the army argued about

The honest reading requires the counter-current, and it is real.

Français tirailleur did not go unchallenged. Voices inside and outside the army objected to the jargon almost as soon as it was codified, and the criticism eventually carried: the practice was progressively abandoned in favour of teaching standard French, and the war itself accelerated the change. From 1915–16 the army organised winter camps in the south of France for African troops withdrawn from the line, and in those camps men were taught to read and write actual French — and were taught, in many cases, by French civilians who had never met an African before and who came away from the experience considerably altered. Lucie Cousturier, who lived beside such a camp near Fréjus and taught the men in her garden, published an account of it in 1920 whose title alone marks the distance travelled: *Des inconnus chez moi*, strangers in my house.

So the picture is not one of unrelieved bad faith. It is the more usual and more interesting picture of an institution arguing with itself and slowly changing its mind, with the sharpest version of the old practice preserved in print precisely because somebody took the trouble to write it down in 1916, and the new practice leaving fewer traces because it consisted of ordinary lessons.

But the argument was about method, and it was settled inside a boundary nobody moved. Whether a tirailleur learned pidgin or standard French, he learned as much as his function required. Beyond the function there was a ceiling, and the ceiling was not made of language.

The ceiling

The tirailleurs were the one large body of Africans in whom France invested serious, sustained, deliberate formation. They were drilled, disciplined, fed, clothed, promoted, decorated, and — as the war went on — taught to read. They were also, with a handful of individual exceptions who prove the pattern by how famous they became, prevented from becoming officers.

The exceptions matter and deserve their names: Charles N'Tchoréré, the Gabonese captain who commanded a company in 1940 and was shot by the Germans at Airaines for refusing to be segregated from his French fellow-officers, is the case everyone cites, and he is cited precisely because such cases could be counted. An African could rise through the non-commissioned ranks, could win the Légion d'honneur, could be trusted with men's lives in a firefight — and could not, in the ordinary course, be given the commission that would have put him above a Frenchman.

This is where the two halves of the module meet. The schooling was small because widening it meant admitting people; the promotion ceiling was hard for the same reason. A man formed to the level of sergeant is an asset. A man formed to the level of captain is a claim. And the naturalisation registers say the same thing in the civil register that the officer lists say in the military one: between 1935 and 1949, French West Africa produced no more than sixteen or seventeen new French citizens a year out of fifteen million people. Formation and admission were the same tap, and it was open exactly as far as the work required and shut immediately after.

What filled the space

Now the consequence, which is the largest fact in this study.

France declined to form the Senegalese peasantry. It did not build village schools in any quantity, did not attempt conver-

sion, did not teach French to cultivators, and — by its own administrators' account — declined even to educate the chiefs it governed through, on the ground that the difficulties were too considerable. Of nineteen provincial chiefs in Senegal in the late 1920s, three had any education; of 435 canton chiefs, two or three could speak French.

But a countryside is never left empty. Something forms the young whether or not the state does, and in Senegal there was an institution that wanted the work, had been trying to get it for eight hundred years, and had just been handed the field by the destruction of the only power that had ever kept it out.

The Sufi orders took the country in the two generations after the conquest. The Tijaniyya spread through the towns and the valley under teachers like El Hadj Malick Sy at Tivaouane. And in the ruined Wolof heartland — in Bawol and Kajoor, among the defeated ceddo, the disbanded soldiers of Lat Dior, the deposed chiefs and the dispossessed — a young cleric named Ahmadou Bamba Mbacké gathered disciples and founded, in the late 1880s, the settlement he called Touba.

France read him, correctly, as a danger and, incorrectly, as the old kind. The men flocking to him were exactly the men who had lost the war: the former soldiers of Lat Dior and of the Bourba Djolof, deserters, revoked chiefs, and in 1895 the damel Samba Laobé Fall declared for the movement while populations were refusing the French tax. Bamba was arrested on 10 August 1895, sentenced to political internment by a decision of 5 September, and deported to Mayumba in Gabon, where he stayed until 1902. He was exiled again in 1903, this time to Mauritania under the supervision of Cheikh Sidia, until 1907; then confined at Thiéyène in the Djolof; and finally, from January 1912, at Diourbel, where he remained under watch until his death on 19 July 1927.

Thirty-two years of exile, internment and surveillance, applied to a man who never raised a weapon and who preached the struggle against the self rather than the struggle against the French. And it failed completely, in the way that such measures characteristically fail: each place of exile became a station of a hagiography, the disciples followed him to every one of them, the donations doubled, and when he returned to Diourbel in 1912 thousands came to acclaim him. A man surrounded by police reports had become the most important person in the country.

And then France did the arithmetic. The Murid *talibés* worked — that was the order's core discipline, labour for one's sheikh as an act of devotion — and what they worked at, increasingly, was groundnuts. A brotherhood that could clear scrubland in the eastern Bawol, settle disciplined work-communities on it, keep order among them without a single French policeman, and deliver the crop to the railhead was not a threat. It was the intermediary the colony had been missing since the trading houses squeezed the old creole middlemen out of the peanut trade. From roughly the First World War onward, the relation was converted: land concessions, rail spurs into the new Murid country, a blind eye to the marabouts' authority, and in exchange a peasantry that grew groundnuts, paid tax, kept quiet, and — at the decisive moments — voted as it was advised.

That is the pact on which twentieth-century Senegal was built, and it is the reason the Senegalese case belongs in this collection. France arrived to find a religion that had spent eight centuries failing to complete its conquest of the Wolof states, blocked by a warrior aristocracy that had beaten it three times. France destroyed that aristocracy in a decade. France then declined to put anything of its own in the space, because forming a peasantry it did not intend to admit would have been an expense with no return. Islam completed its conquest in the vacuum — genuinely, deeply, and by the free movement of ordinary people towards something that was of-

fering them a world when nothing else was. And France, needing hands to reach a countryside its own administration could not reach, ended by paying rent on the very machine its violence had helped finish building.

Nobody planned this. It is what the arithmetic produced, applied by men who were mostly not thinking beyond the next harvest.

What formation was for

Four things follow.

The first is that formation was rationed to function. Faidherbe's hostage school made interpreters; the William Ponty school made schoolmasters, clerks and medical assistants; the army made corporals. In each case the training was real, often excellent, and stopped precisely where the usefulness stopped. This is not a failure of the civilising doctrine but an accurate expression of what it cost: **the level of education a ruling power gives the ruled is the level its own tasks require, plus nothing, because everything past that point is a claim on the ruler rather than a service to him.** A clerk is an asset; a lawyer is a plaintiff. A sergeant is an asset; a captain is a precedent. The tap for schooling and the tap for citizenship were the same tap, and the figure of sixteen new citizens a year in a federation of fifteen million is what it looked like when almost fully closed.

The second is that formation can be withheld by deforming rather than by omitting, and this is cheaper and more thorough than simply teaching nothing. The 1916 manual is not the absence of instruction. It is a positive investment — printing costs, distribution, an author's labour, an official imprint — in producing a version of the coloniser's language with the grammar of argument engineered out of it: no tenses, no articles, no conjunctions, no subordination, one word per idea, and a model sentence defining a good soldier as one who obeys. And its most telling instruction is the

prohibition on African NCOs teaching French, on the ground that they would deform it. **Where a ruler must give the ruled some of his own language, watch which parts he gives; a vocabulary sufficient for a command and insufficient for a demand is not a shortfall in the teaching but the specification of it.** The counter-current is real and must be conceded — the jargon was criticised, then abandoned, and men were taught genuine French in the winter camps from 1915 — but the argument was over method inside a boundary that did not move.

The third is that a coloniser who withholds formation does not thereby leave the field empty; he concedes it. The Wolof countryside was not un-formed after 1890. It was formed thoroughly, by Qur'anic schooling, by the discipline of work for one's sheikh, by a calendar and a law and a set of holy places — and it was formed by an institution that France had spent thirty-two years exiling, interning and watching, without effect. **The question to ask of any order that declines to teach the majority is not whether the majority stays ignorant, which it never does, but who does the teaching instead, and what that party will eventually be owed.** France's answer arrived within a generation: it was owed the countryside.

The fourth is about the soldiers, and it is the one that will detonate. The tirailleurs were the single body of Africans in whom France invested real formation, and it did so because their belief was structurally necessary in a way that no cultivator's was. But formation given for a purpose has a way of exceeding the purpose. Men taught in a printed pidgin that the good rifleman always obeys were shipped to France, billeted in French villages, taught to read by French civilians, wounded beside French soldiers, decorated by French generals — and thereby taught, at French expense and quite outside the syllabus, the one lesson the whole colonial arrangement depended on their not learning: what a Frenchman actually is, and how little separates him from them-

selves. **A ruler who forms a body of men to hold his order down has necessarily formed them well enough to notice when the order lies to them.** They noticed. And the bill they eventually presented was itemised, and modest, and consisted entirely of money they were owed.

A note on sources. The module's central primary text is *Le français tel que le parlent nos tirailleurs sénégalais* (Paris, Imprimerie-Librairie Militaire Universelle L. Fournier, 1916, 35 pp., published anonymously), which is public domain and was read in full in the Project Gutenberg transcription (ebook 61961), the same text being held in facsimile by Gallica. All quotations from it — the statement of purpose ("*leur connaissance facilitera la tache des nombreux gradés européens…*"), the second governing rule ("*la forme très simple qu'a la phrase dans tous les dialectes primitifs de notre Afrique Occidentale*"), the model sentences for the adjective ("*Tirailleur y en a bon, lui toujours obéir*" / "*Tirailleur y en a pas bon, lui pas obéir*"), and the prohibition on native NCOs teaching French ("*On évitera de faire faire ces théories de français par des gradés indigènes…*") — are exact and were taken directly from that text, as were the examples *cheval-femme*, *chien-femme*, *mon case*, *moi y a parti hier*, *encore deux jours toi partir*, and the *gagner* paradigm (*moi y a gagné caporal* / *lui y a gagné mort* / *moi y a gagné blessé*). **Faidherbe's letter to the minister of 23 January 1856 on the school of hostages is quoted only in translation and in paraphrase, not in the original**, because it was available here through a single reproducing source — a doctoral thesis of the Université Cheikh Anta Diop, which cites it as Archives nationales, Section Outre-Mer, S X 5c, after Hervé de Lauture and others (1981) — and the study will not present a single-sourced archival quotation as exact French until it has been collated. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited: Cécile Van den Avenne on the army's language policy, the *français tirailleur* and the winter camps; the standard institutional histories for the *école des otages* (Saint-Louis, 1855; closed 1871; reopened in the 1890s as the *École des fils de chefs et des interprètes*), the normal school at Saint-Louis of November 1903, its transfer to Gorée on 1 March 1913 and its renaming for William Ponty in 1915 after his death at Dakar on 13 June that year; Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch for the naturalisation figures. Contested or approximate points are flagged as such. **The founding date of Touba is given deliberately loosely as the late 1880s**, the sources consulted disagreeing (1887 and 1888 both appear, and one Senegalese account de-

scribes a distinct foundation in the Djolof in 1895), and it is not load-bearing here. Bamba's dates are given as reported by the Senegalese scholarly and archival press: birth 1852 or 1853 at Mbacké; arrest 10 August 1895; sentence of political internment 5 September 1895; deportation to Mayumba, Gabon, 1895 to 1902 (some accounts say eight years, others seven, and the return is given as 1902 in most and 1903 in a few); Mauritania under Cheikh Sidia 1903–1907; residence at Thiéyène from April 1907; Diourbel from 13 or 16 January 1912; death 19 July 1927. The account of the Murid accommodation with the colonial administration — land concessions and rail access in exchange for groundnut production and social order — follows the standard scholarship (Donal Cruise O'Brien, Jean Copans, James Searing, David Robinson), paraphrased, and is developed further where the extraction is measured. Charles N'Tchoréré's death at Airaines in June 1940 follows the standard military record. Lucie Cousturier's *Des inconnus chez moi* (Paris, 1920) is named and described but not quoted. The Senegalese chieftaincy establishment of the late 1920s (19 provincial chiefs, three educated; 435 canton chiefs, two or three French-speaking) is from a colonial political report reproduced in the *Éducation, citoyenneté et colonies* source collection.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

FIFTEEN DAYS AND A HUNDRED FRANCS

Module 5 · why the ordinary man complied — a punishment deliberately too small to be worth resisting, a tax that could be discharged in only one way, and an open border two days' walk away that almost nobody used, because it led to the same machine under a different flag

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The man they could always reach

Start with the question that matters and refuse the easy answers to it. A Wolof or Serer cultivator in the groundnut country in 1930 was taxed in cash he had to earn by growing a crop he could not eat, liable to unpaid labour on the roads, liable to have his sons taken for the army or the work brigades, and punishable without trial by a foreign official he had never met. He was not stupid, he was not passive, and his grandfather had ridden with Lat Dior. Why did he comply?

Not, in the first instance, because of the army. The tirailleurs were mostly elsewhere. The thing that made compliance rational began much closer to home, in the person of a man from the next village who spoke his language and knew his family.

The colonial unit was the *cercle*, run by a French *commandant de cercle*, and beneath him lay the cantons and the villages, each with a chief appointed by the French and removable by them. That chief assessed the tax, named the men for the labour levy, produced the conscripts, and reported who

had said what. He was not a survival of the old order — the administration was explicit about that, as its own inspectors kept repeating: he held no power of his own, he was an instrument. But he had something no French official could ever have. He knew which compound had a hidden granary, which young man had gone to the Gambia and when he came back, which household had four sons and had declared two.

That is the mechanism. The reach of the colonial state over an individual Senegalese was not the reach of Paris, or of Dakar, or even of the *commandant*: it was the reach of a neighbour with an incentive. Add the *gardes de cercle* — African police, a few dozen to a district — and the machinery of surveillance is complete and cheap and almost entirely staffed by the surveilled.

Punishment sized to be paid

Now the crucial and counter-intuitive part: what happened to a man who refused.

The regime was the *indigénat*, extended to Senegal outside the four coastal communes by a decree of 30 September 1887 and refined for the next sixty years. Its core was a schedule of "special offences" — acts punishable in a native which were not offences at all in a Frenchman — running to thirty-four vague headings, later reduced to about twelve, and covering such things as refusing an order for the labour levy, refusing French currency, disrespect towards an official, or holding a gathering. The *commandant de cercle*, or in practice any European, could impose punishment for these on his own authority, without charge, without trial, without a lawyer and without appeal, being simultaneously the legislator, the policeman and the judge.

And the punishment was: fifteen days' imprisonment, or a hundred francs' fine, or both.

Sit with the smallness of that. This is the disciplinary instrument of an empire, applied to a subject population of millions across sixty years, and its ordinary maximum is a fortnight and a sum of money that a good harvest could cover. It is not a terror. It is a friction — constant, arbitrary, humiliating, and calibrated with some precision to remain permanently below the threshold at which a rational man will risk his life.

That calibration is the module's first finding and it is easy to miss because the instrument looks mild on paper and was not mild in practice. A fortnight in a colonial lock-up during the planting rains could cost a family its year. Fines fell on households with no cash. The arbitrariness was the point: a man who could be punished for anything, at any time, by any European, adjusts his whole bearing rather than any particular behaviour. But the arithmetic in his head never comes out in favour of revolt, because revolt is answered by machine guns and non-compliance is answered by fifteen days. **An oppression that stays small stays profitable.** The men who designed this had learned, whether or not they could have said so, that the way to hold a country cheaply is to keep every individual punishment survivable, so that no individual ever faces the choice that makes rebellion rational.

Behind the small penalty stood a large one, rarely used and therefore effective. Under article 22 of the decree of 15 November 1924, the governor-general could order the internment of any native for ten years, or even twenty, and his decision was without appeal whatever its grounds. That is the instrument that removed Ahmadou Bamba for thirty-two years and that hung, unmentioned and unforgotten, behind every fifteen-day sentence. The ordinary friction was bearable precisely because the extraordinary punishment existed and was almost never needed.

The tax that had one answer

But fear is not the main thing holding this order together, and a study that stops at the *indigénat* will misread the whole colony. The principal chain on the Senegalese cultivator was fiscal, and it worked not by forcing him to do anything but by forcing him to need something.

The head tax — the *impôt de capitation* — was levied on every adult, assessed by the village chief, and payable in money. The rates were not enormous. In 1905 it stood at four francs a head in the districts of Dagana, Louga, Thiès and Tivaouane and in the province of Sine, and three francs in Bakel, Matam, Podor and the Saloum provinces, with four francs fifty in some cercles. It rose over the following decades. It was, by 1952, some sixty to seventy per cent of all direct tax collected. Together with forced labour it made up roughly half of all public revenue in French sub-Saharan Africa by 1925 — a figure worth pausing over, since it means the colonial state was funded, to about half, by the bodies and the cash of the poorest people in it.

The mechanism is in the words *payable in money*. A household could feed itself on millet and sorghum indefinitely without ever touching a franc. It could not pay its tax that way. So each year every adult male in the groundnut basin needed a quantity of French currency, and there was exactly one lawful way for a Senegalese cultivator to obtain French currency, which was to grow groundnuts and sell them to a French trading house at a price the house set, frequently against an advance the house had already made him in goods.

Nobody had to compel him to plant peanuts. The tax compelled him, and the tax was collected by his neighbour, and the debt was held by the factory at the railhead, and the price was fixed in Bordeaux. He was not a slave and he was not a serf: he was a smallholder on his own land with an annual cash obligation and one buyer. Set beside the whip, this

is a far better instrument, because it requires no supervision, generates its own enforcement through the chief's tax quota, and produces exactly the crop the colony exists to export.

To this were added the labour obligations, and here the language of the period is unusually candid. The *prestation* — which Senegalese called the sweat tax — required every man between eighteen and sixty to give a number of days each year on the public works: the Ancien Régime's *corvée*, abolished in France by the Revolution, reintroduced in Africa by the Republic. And from the decree of 31 October 1926, military conscription was divided in two: the first portion went into the army as tirailleurs, and the second portion — men called up, put in uniform, and set to work — went for two years onto the federation's construction sites. Senghor's name for them was *tirailleurs-la-pelle*, riflemen-with-a-shovel.

The administration's own justification survives, in a report of the political and administrative affairs directorate of French West Africa, and it is worth reading beside the pavilions at Vincennes: the work units created under the 1926 decree answered not merely an economic necessity but a duty of the educating nation, and it would be a failure of the civilising mission to give up the struggle against atavistic idleness and leave millions to moulder in a wretched condition. A forced-labour brigade, described in the vocabulary of a school.

The door that stood open

Now the fact that makes Senegal different, and that a reader expecting a sealed colony will not expect at all.

The exit was wide open. It was, geographically, one of the most open exits in the colonial world. The British colony of the Gambia is a strip of territory following its river some three hundred and fifty kilometres inland, rarely more than fifty kilometres wide, driven like a wedge into the middle of French Senegal — an artefact of Anglo-French bargaining

that produced a border no African had asked for and that a great many Africans lived on both sides of. To the south lay Portuguese Guinea. To the north, across the river, Mauritania. In the groundnut basin a man could reach a foreign flag in a couple of days' walk, and the people on the other side of it were frequently his own kin.

And it was used. During the First World War, as conscription bit, tens of thousands left Senegal for the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea; Gambian district population returns rose measurably between 1915 and 1918 as the recruiters worked the French side; the French administration asked the British to hand back the men it called deserters; and the British — lacking the means to police the border, and pleased enough by an influx that increased both their taxes and their groundnut crop — did not seriously oblige. Flight was a real and practised option, and the colonial state knew it and could not stop it.

So why did the overwhelming majority stay?

Because the door led to the same room

Three answers, and together they dispose of the idea that people stay put because they are trapped.

The first is that leaving cost a man his land. Senegalese land tenure ran through lineage: a household worked ground its family had held, under arrangements that everybody local understood and no register recorded. Walk across a border and you own nothing. The Gambia's seasonal migrants had a name — *navétanes*, the strange farmers — and their position was precisely that of a man farming someone else's field for a share of the crop and a place to sleep. Gambian officials repeatedly reckoned that such migrants produced about half the colony's groundnut output, and in the interwar peak as many as ninety thousand a year were recorded arriving. It was a living. It was not an escape; it was a demotion, undertaken seasonally by men who intended to go home.

The second answer is the decisive one. **The Gambia ran the same machine.** It had a head tax. It had groundnuts as its single export. It had European trading houses buying at prices they set. It had a colonial administration, chiefs appointed to collect, and a peasantry growing peanuts to pay. A Senegalese cultivator who crossed the river did not escape the arrangement; he changed the flag on the customs post and the language of the man who wrote the receipt. British Gambia was, if anything, more neglected than French Senegal — considered too small and too poor to justify spending on roads, schools or clinics.

This is worth stating plainly because it corrects an instinct. One asks of any oppressive order whether the ruled could get out, and treats a hard border, a desert, an island, a mountain wall as the thing that makes a population capturable. Senegal shows that the geography of exit is not the point. **What determines whether an exit is real is not whether a man can reach the other side but whether the other side is organised differently.** When every neighbouring power runs the same extraction on the same crop through the same houses, an open border is not a door. It is a change of landlord, and men will make that change for a season's wage and not for a life.

The exit that worked, and why France allowed it

The third answer is the one that shaped modern Senegal, and it is an exit that never crossed a border.

A man in the groundnut basin who found his canton chief intolerable — the tax assessment padded, the labour levy falling always on his household, the chief a Frenchman's appointee with no claim on him that his grandfather would have recognised — had another option. He could go east, to the sandy scrub frontier of the Bawol and the Saloum, and join a Murid community.

What he got there was substantial. Land, cleared from bush by the collective labour of disciples and allotted to him. A community organised around work as an act of devotion. A marabout whose authority he actually acknowledged, in place of a canton chief whose authority he did not. Protection from the chief's arbitrary demands, since the brotherhood dealt with the administration on its members' behalf. And all of it inside his own language, his own religion, and his own country.

He was not, however, outside the ledger. He still grew groundnuts — more of them, and more reliably, because Murid work discipline was formidable and the new land was fresh. He still paid his tax, collected now through the brotherhood. He still sold to the same houses at the same railheads, on lines the administration was pleased to extend into the new Murid country.

And this is precisely why France permitted it, and then encouraged it, having spent thirty years trying to destroy the man who started it. An exit that removes a subject from a chief's jurisdiction but not from the tax roll or the export figures costs the ruler nothing. It is better than nothing: it takes exactly the men most likely to make trouble — the aggrieved, the dispossessed, the sons of the beaten aristocracy — and moves them to a frontier where their grievance is converted into cleared land and delivered tonnage. The pressure that in another colony would have accumulated until it burst had, in Senegal, somewhere to go, and where it went it paid its tax on arrival.

Nobody in the administration wrote this down as a policy of pressure release. They arrived at it by observing that the Murids delivered crops and quiet, and by preferring both to the alternative. But it is the reason there was no great peasant rising in the Senegalese groundnut basin in sixty years — not the *indigénat*, not the tirailleurs, and certainly not the closed border, because the border was not closed.

What held him in place

Four things follow, and the second and third run against the expectation one brings to a colony of this kind.

First: the reach that mattered was a neighbour's, not an army's. Nothing in the French apparatus could have found a hidden granary or an undeclared son in a Serer compound. The canton chief could, and did, because he was from there. A colonial state achieves the surveillance of millions on the budget of hundreds by recruiting the last hundred metres from among the surveilled — and it pays for this in a coin it does not notice, since the legitimacy the chief spends is his own, borrowed against a standing he did not earn from France and cannot renew. **Where the enforcer is a neighbour, the state's reach is total and its moral credit is somebody else's.**

Second, and the sharper point: the punishment was deliberately kept too small to fight. Fifteen days and a hundred francs, imposed without trial, for offences that were not offences in France — an instrument perfectly designed to make defiance not worth what it costs and compliance not quite worth refusing. Behind it, used perhaps a few times a decade, sat the governor-general's power to intern any native for ten or twenty years without appeal. **The two together are the actual design: a small certain penalty for ordinary refusal and a catastrophic rare one for organised refusal, which is the cheapest known way to hold a population, because it never presents any individual with a decision worth dying over.** The measure of such an order is not the severity of its worst punishment but the modesty of its usual one.

Third: the chain was fiscal before it was penal. The head tax was payable only in money, money came only from groundnuts, groundnuts went only to the trading houses, and the houses set the price and held the debt. A man in that position is compelled without ever being ordered. He plants

what the colony needs because he needs francs in December, and the whole apparatus of chiefs, police and summary punishment exists mainly to make sure the tax is assessed and collected — which is to say, to keep the need in being. **Look for the obligation that can be discharged in only one way, and you have found what actually organises the subject's year.**

Fourth, and the finding this colony contributes: an open exit can stabilise an order rather than threaten it. The instinct is to ask whether the ruled could leave, and to treat a sealed frontier as what makes them capturable. Senegal had one of the most permeable borders in colonial Africa — a British colony driven three hundred and fifty kilometres into its middle, a Portuguese one to the south, kin on every side — and tens of thousands did walk out during the conscription years. The order held anyway, for two reasons that should be separated. The external exit was real but led to an identical arrangement under another flag, so it functioned as seasonal wage migration rather than as escape: **an exit only counts as an exit if the other side is organised differently, and when every neighbour extracts the same crop by the same means, a border is not a way out.** And the internal exit — into the brotherhoods — was tolerated and then quietly encouraged, because it moved the discontented off a chief's roll without moving them off the tax roll or out of the export figures. **A ruler will permit, and eventually subsidise, any exit that relocates the subject while keeping him in the ledger; and such an exit is worth more to the ruler than a sealed border, because it drains precisely the men who would otherwise have had nowhere to go but revolt.**

Which is why the reckoning in this colony, when it came, did not come from the villages at all. The cultivator had a tolerable answer to every question the order put to him, and where he did not, he had somewhere to walk. The men who

had no such answer were the ones who had been given a promise instead of a field.

A note on sources. This module quotes no primary text in the original, and the absence is deliberate: the documents that would carry it — the *indigénat* schedules as promulgated for Senegal, the internment article of the decree of 15 November 1924, and the political affairs report justifying the second portion of the contingent — were available here only through reproducing sources or in translation, and the study will not present single-sourced legal wording as exact French until it has been collated against the *Journal officiel* or the *Journal officiel de l'AOF*. They are therefore given in paraphrase, and flagged here for collation before compilation: **the decree of 30 September 1887 extending the *indigénat* to Senegal outside the Four Communes; the ordinary penalty of fifteen days' imprisonment and a hundred francs' fine, cumulative, imposed by administrative decision; the reduction of the schedule of special offences from thirty-four headings to about twelve; article 22 of the decree of 15 November 1924 empowering the governor-general to intern any native for ten or twenty years without appeal; and the decree of 31 October 1926 creating the second portion of the contingent.** All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The account of the *cercle*, the appointed canton chieftaincy and the *gardes de cercle* follows the standard administrative histories. Forced labour in its four Senegalese forms — the *prestation* or sweat tax on men aged eighteen to sixty, the second portion of the contingent, obligatory penal labour with its mobile road camps, and requisition — follows Romain Tiquet's archival study of forced labour and labour mobilisation in Senegal, paraphrased throughout, as does the political affairs directorate's justification of the work brigades as a duty of the educating nation and a struggle against atavistic idleness. Senghor's phrase *tirailleurs-la-pelle* is reported as attributed to him in that literature and is not presented as a collated quotation. Head tax rates are as reported in the annual general report of the government-general of French West Africa for 1908 (four francs in the cercles of Dagana, Louga, Thiès and Tivaouane and in the province of Sine; three francs in Bakel, Matam, Podor and the Niombato, Niorot-Rip and Saloum provinces; four francs fifty in some cercles), cited in the recent literature on colonial fiscality. The proportion of direct tax represented by the head tax in 1952 (sixty to seventy per cent) is Gastellu's. The estimate that head tax and forced labour together constituted about half of public revenue in French sub-Saharan Africa in 1925, and that colonial administrations levied on av-

erage nine per cent of colonial GDP in 1925 and sixteen per cent in 1955, is from the recent quantitative work on French colonial public accounts (Cogneau, Dupraz, Mesplé-Somps and colleagues), reported as published. **Migration figures are given as ranges and as estimates throughout, because they are estimates:** the wartime flight from Senegal to the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea is given as tens of thousands, on the basis of Gambian district population returns for 1915 and 1918 which the sources themselves describe as imprecise; the interwar peak of recorded seasonal arrivals in the Gambia is given as up to some ninety thousand a year (David, 1980), and the Gambian officials' repeated estimate that migrants produced about half the colony's groundnut output follows Jarrett (1949) and the recent survey literature on cash-crop migration. The Gambia's dimensions are given as approximate. The account of the Murid frontier settlement, its land clearance, its work discipline and its accommodation with the administration follows Donal Cruise O'Brien, Jean Copans, James Searing and David Robinson, paraphrased; **the reading of that settlement as a pressure valve that the administration came to prefer is the study's own inference from the sequence of events, not a claim any colonial official is here shown to have made**, and it is offered as such.

NINE-TENTHS OF THE VALUE

Module 6 · what was taken — a coast extracted three different ways in three centuries, ending with a peasantry that kept its land, lost every alternative to one crop, and paid more into the French treasury than it received back until the year the arrangement began to end

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

Three takings

Senegal was extracted three times over, by three incompatible methods, and the sequence is the argument.

For about two centuries the commodity was people. Then, for roughly a hundred years, it was a tree gum harvested by other people's slaves at the desert's edge. Then, for a final eighty, it was a groundnut grown by smallholders on their own land. Each of these takes something different, needs something different from the African, and leaves something different behind — and the differences are large enough that treating them as one continuous "colonial exploitation" loses everything worth knowing.

The last of the three is the one that made the country, and its measure is a single figure from a 1930 survey of the trade: groundnuts by then represented more than nine-tenths of the value of Senegal's exports. Nine-tenths. Whatever else colonial Senegal was, it was a machine for turning sandy soil into peanut oil for Marseille, and everything else in the colony had become a component of that machine.

The first taking, and the arithmetic of a memorial

The Atlantic trade requires care, because the numbers most people carry are wrong in a direction that makes the true account harder rather than easier to hold.

The House of Slaves on Gorée is the most visited memorial of the trade in Africa, and the figure attached to it — that as many as twenty million people passed through the island — is not supportable and has been rejected by the historians of the trade for half a century. It cannot be true, on the simplest arithmetic: the best current estimates for the entire Atlantic trade, from every African coast to every American destination across four hundred years, run to something like twelve to twelve point eight million people embarked, revised upward only modestly from Philip Curtin's 1969 census, which put arrivals in the Americas at about nine and a half million. Twenty million through one small island off the Cap-Vert is a larger number than the whole trade. Curtin, who did more than anyone to establish the real figures, was blunt about the Gorée story: the whole account, he said, is phony. The building itself, on the estimates of the historians who have examined it, is too small to have held what is claimed for it, and Gorée's role in the trade was real but marginal — a supply station and a garrison rather than a great entrepôt.

What is the true figure? For Senegambia as a whole — the two rivers and the coast between them, not the island — Boubacar Barry's estimate is that slavers operating out of the region exported something on the order of six thousand people a year during the eighteenth century.

Six thousand a year. For a hundred years. From one stretch of coast.

The correction of the memorial figure is not a diminishment of the crime and should not be allowed to become one. Six hundred thousand people from Senegambia in a century is a catastrophe on any scale a human being can hold, and the

arithmetic of it — a village of moderate size, taken and shipped, every three weeks, for a hundred years — is not made bearable by being smaller than the legend. What the correction does is redirect attention from a building to a system. The real indictment of the French presence on this coast is not a doorway on Gorée. It is the fact established earlier in this study and disputed by nobody: that when a mass religious movement rose across the Wolof states in the 1670s with the abolition of the slave export as its central demand, the French at Saint-Louis put their weight behind the warrior kings who were selling, because the movement's success would have closed their ledger. That is a specific choice, by named men, in a documented decade, and it is worse than any number attached to a cell.

Note what kind of taking this is, because it is the only one of the three that obeys neither of the logics that organise the rest of colonial history. A landlord taking a share of the harvest needs the producer alive and working and will leave his village standing. A settler taking the ground needs the producer gone. The Atlantic trade wanted neither the land nor the producer in place: it wanted the person, removed, as the commodity itself. It is an extraction that consumes the population rather than taxing it or displacing it, and it leaves behind not a tenantry and not an emptied landscape but a society reorganised around producing captives — which is precisely what the ceddo aristocracy was, and precisely why it could not survive the trade's abolition intact.

The second taking

The gum phase is brief and worth naming only because it explains the transition.

Gum arabic — the hardened sap of acacia, essential to European textile printing and pharmacy — was harvested on the desert edge north of the river by the slaves of the Arabo-Berber tribes, brought to seasonal markets called *escales*,

and bought there by the traders of Saint-Louis against the dark blue Indian cottons called *guinées*. It made the fortunes of the creole *habitants* and the early Bordeaux houses. It also had a structural defect from the French point of view: the French did not control production, did not control the harvest, and paid whatever the emirs demanded for access. When European industrial substitutes and falling prices squeezed the trade in the 1830s and 1840s, the merchants of Saint-Louis found themselves indebted, exposed, and dependent on a commodity they could not command.

This is what produced the conquest. The petitions to the ministry, the plan of 1854, the demand to be suzerains of the river — all of it is a merchant class trying to get out from under a commodity whose terms it did not set. And what it moved to instead was a crop that could be grown wherever France could reach, by cultivators France could tax.

The third taking, and the shape of the machine

The groundnut arc is best given in figures, and the figures are dramatic. Taken as annual averages over five-year periods, Senegalese groundnut exports ran roughly as follows: 30,546 tonnes in 1879–85; 32,440 in 1884–88; 38,554 in 1889–93; 61,552 in 1894–98; 121,274 in 1899–1903; 126,614 in 1904–08; 206,251 in 1909–13; 197,920 through the war years 1914–18; 274,010 in 1919–23; and about 410,000 tonnes by 1924–28. Point-year figures from a separate series tell the same story: 51,600 tonnes exported in 1895, 140,000 in 1900, 224,000 in 1909, 303,000 in 1914.

A thirteen-fold increase in half a century. And the same 1930 survey names the cause without embarrassment: the rapid progress since the war was owed to the creation of communications, roads and above all railways, particularly the Thiès–Kayes line with its branch from Guinguinéo to Kaolack on the Saloum, which permitted the extension of the cultivated zone. The railway was not built to carry Senegalese any-

where. It was built to reach the peanut, and the peanut zone is, to a very good approximation, the map of the track.

Now the mechanism, which is where the extraction actually happens, because the tonnage alone tells you nothing about who kept what.

The system was called the *traite*, the seasonal buying of the crop, and it ran on advance credit. Before the rains, the house — or its bush *factorerie*, or a licensed intermediary — advanced the cultivator goods: cloth, rice, sugar, tools, sometimes the seed itself. The advance was valued by the house. At harvest the cultivator delivered his nuts, at a price also set by the house, and the debt was struck against the delivery. What remained, if anything, was his.

Three properties of that arrangement matter. The cultivator never handled the world price and had no means of discovering it. He was frequently in debt before he planted, which meant he could not choose his buyer. And because the head tax fell due in cash in the same season, he could not choose not to sell. The colonial administration's own function in this was to keep the tax collected, which is to say to keep the need in being; the houses' function was to meet the need on their own terms. Neither party had to coerce anybody. The arrangement coerced.

And the buyers were few. The Bordeaux group and its successors — Maurel & Prom, Devès et Chaumet, Buhan et Teisseire, then Peyrissac, Vézia, Chavanel, Delmas, then the chartered giants CFAO and SCOA — bought the crop, sold the imports the cultivator bought with the proceeds, and held the credit on both legs. By 1946 the market capitalisation of the SCOA and the CFAO alone represented about eighty-four per cent of all listed French West African corporations on the Paris exchange. A peasantry of a million households faced, in practice, a buying oligopoly of about a dozen firms.

The peasant kept one thing, and the survey notes it in passing: production ran about a fifth higher than exports, the cultivators retaining roughly twenty per cent of the harvest for seed and their own needs. That fifth is the whole of his margin — his seed for next year, his hedge, his food if the millet failed.

The trap inside the arrangement

Which brings the module to the thing that a tonnage series conceals.

Extraction of this kind does not kill the producer. It needs him alive, on his land, planting again in June, and French policy was accordingly careful never to take so much that he could not. There was no dispossession, no plantation system worth the name, no mass proletarianisation. Measured year by year, the rate was survivable. That is why it lasted.

But something else was happening across the decades, and it does not show up as a rate. Every year that the groundnut zone extended, the alternatives contracted. Land that had grown millet grew peanuts. Fallow shortened. The seasonal round reorganised around a crop that could not be eaten. Herding retreated. Craft production collapsed under imported cloth bought with peanut money. And the household's food security came to depend not on its granary but on the price a French house would offer in January, which depended on the Marseille oil market, which depended on the Indian crop.

So when the price broke, it broke everything. In the 1930s the international prices of cash crops fell to their real values of 1914, and the rural communities of French West Africa went through a process of impoverishment as their living conditions deteriorated; the crisis that began in 1927 in the groundnut trade was, in the assessment of the trade's historians, deeper than the previous one of 1883–85, because world supply had swollen — Indian exports alone exceeded

700,000 tonnes in 1928 against French West Africa's 430,000 — and pressed on prices before European demand even slackened. A man in Kaolack with no millet in the granary and a debt at the factory discovered that his security had been located, without his ever agreeing to it, in a market he had never seen.

This is the finding that the rate-versus-dispossession distinction misses. The Senegalese cultivator was not robbed of his land and was not worked to death. He was, over two generations, deprived of every alternative to a single transaction — and a man with one buyer, one crop and one creditor has been dispossessed of something that does not appear in any land register.

Who got what

Sort the take, and the sorting is instructive because the lines do not fall where the rhetoric would put them.

The French trading houses took the margin between the price paid at the *escale* or the bush factory and the price realised in Marseille, plus the interest on the advance, plus the margin on the imports sold back. This was the largest single share and it left the country.

The colonial state took the head tax and the customs, and used it to run itself. The head tax alone amounted to something like sixty to seventy per cent of all direct taxation by 1952, and together with forced labour made up roughly half of all public revenue in French sub-Saharan Africa by 1925.

The canton chiefs took a percentage. Their remuneration ran substantially on a rebate against the tax they collected, which is a design of some elegance: it made the assessor's income a function of the assessment and removed any need for French supervision of his zeal.

The marabouts took a share, and it is important to be exact about its nature. What flowed to the Sufi orders — offerings,

labour on the sheikh's fields, a portion of the crop — was given, not levied, and it bought things the colonial state did not supply: land, community, protection from a chief, dispute resolution, standing. It was extraction in the sense that a surplus moved upward. It was not extraction in the sense that the giver was compelled by force. Naming both facts at once is the only honest way to hold it.

The African and métis merchants of the four communes — the old *habitants* — took less and less. The bush factory and the direct-buying house destroyed them commercially within a generation of the railway, which is why their political energy went where it did: into the one asset the trading houses could not take, which was their citizenship.

And the Senegalese cultivator took his fifth of the crop, his imported cloth, and whatever remained of the sale after the advance and the tax.

The ledger, and the counter-position

Now the accounting question that any colonial study must eventually face, because it is the ground on which the whole arrangement is usually defended: did France put in more than it took out?

The best current answer comes from the quantitative work on colonial public accounts, and it is specific. Up to the Second World War, the colonies of French West Africa were on average a net subsidiser of the French government. Only in the late colonial period, with the establishment of FIDES, did French West Africa become a net receiver of subsidies.

That sentence should be read twice. For the entire period of conquest, pacification, taxation, forced labour and monoculture — roughly 1854 to 1940 — the arrangement ran in France's favour on France's own public accounts. The colony paid for its own administration, its own police, its own railways to carry its own crop to French buyers, and returned a

surplus. The familiar defence that empire was an expensive philanthropy that cost the metropole more than it earned is, for French West Africa before 1940, not supported by the accounts.

And then, in 1946, it changed, and the honest version of this module has to say so plainly. FIDES was established in 1946, France abandoning its earlier doctrine that colonies should be entirely self-sufficient, and real money went in — roads, ports, airfields, schools, hospitals, water. The historical consensus, as Paul Nugent puts it, is that FIDES amounted to considerably more than an ideological fig leaf, channelling substantial resources into the African colonies, initially into infrastructure and later into industrial and agricultural projects. Dakar's port, the medical school, the roads, the hospitals: these are real, they were paid for from Paris, and Senegal inherited them. The strongest form of the counter-position is that in its last fifteen years the French presence transferred more into Senegal than it took out, and that the country which became independent in 1960 possessed infrastructure and institutions it could not have built alone in that time.

The strongest form of the reply is not to deny any of it but to note when it happened. The investment began the year after the war that had exposed the empire's weakness, in the same season as the abolition of forced labour and the extension of citizenship, and it was a response to the arrangement's approaching end rather than a feature of it. For eighty-six years the ledger ran one way. For fourteen it ran the other. Both are in the accounts, and a study that reports only the second is describing the departure and calling it the occupation.

What the extraction shows

Three things, and the first is a correction to a distinction this collection has been leaning on.

First: there are three ways to extract from a conquered population, not two, and the third obeys neither logic. Taking a share of what people produce needs them alive and in place, and so preserves the village. Taking the ground needs them gone, and so destroys it. The Atlantic trade did neither: it took the people themselves, wanting neither their land nor their labour where they stood. What it left behind was not a tenantry and not an emptied country but a society reorganised around the production of captives — an aristocracy whose revenue, army and internal discipline all ran on selling human beings, which is why the abolition of the export was a mortal threat to it and why it fought the men who demanded abolition harder than it ever fought the French. **A conquest that removes people rather than taxing or displacing them reshapes the society it buys from into an instrument for supplying itself, and that instrument cannot outlive the market.** The ceddo order died of the ending of the trade, twenty years before French troops finished it off.

Second: extraction by rate can ruin a producer without ever taking too much from him. The Senegalese peasant kept his land, kept his village, kept about a fifth of his crop, and was never taken so hard in any single year that he could not plant the next. Judged annually, the take was moderate; that moderation is why the system lasted eighty years. But across those years the arrangement removed his alternatives one at a time — the millet field, the fallow, the herd, the craft, the granary as a store against a bad season — until his survival was located in a price set in a market he had never seen. **The damage done by a moderate rate is not what it takes but what it forecloses; measure the narrowing of options, not the size of the levy, because a man with one crop, one buyer and one creditor has been dispossessed of something the land register does not record.** In 1930 he found out.

Third: the colonial account ran in the metropole's favour for as long as the metropole was confident, and reversed only when it was not. French West Africa was a net contributor to the French government's finances until the Second World War and a net recipient thereafter, and the turn came in 1946, in the same season as the abolition of forced labour and the widening of citizenship. **Investment is not evidence of intention; it is evidence of position.** A ruling power spends on the ruled when it needs their consent and not before — which is why the roads, the hospitals and the schools of French West Africa mostly date from the fifteen years in which France was arguing, to an audience that had stopped simply believing it, that the arrangement was worth keeping. The buildings are real. So is the date on them.

A note on sources. This module quotes no primary text in the original; its evidence is quantitative, and the figures are given with their provenance and their disputes attached. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. **The contested figure flagged earlier in this study is settled here as far as the evidence permits, and its dispute is reported rather than resolved by assertion.** The claim that as many as twenty million people passed through Gorée is not supported and is rejected by the historians of the trade: the best current estimates put the entire Atlantic trade at roughly 11.9 to 12.8 million embarked from all of Africa across four centuries (Lovejoy's syntheses and the subsequent shipping-database revisions), against Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (1969), which estimated about 9,566,000 arrivals in the Americas; Curtin's own published judgement on the Gorée account is quoted in the four-word form in which it is universally reproduced. The argument that the Maison des Esclaves is physically too small for the numbers claimed, and that Gorée's role was marginal, follows the recent scholarly literature; the study notes that Curtin's totals were themselves contested upward at the time, notably by J. E. Inikori (1976), and that the range rather than any single figure is what should be carried. The Senegambian export estimate of about six thousand people a year during the eighteenth century is Boubacar Barry's (1998), as reported in the survey literature. The groundnut export series by five-year annual averages (30,546

tonnes in 1879–85 rising to about 410,000 in 1924–28), the observation that groundnuts came to represent more than nine-tenths of the value of Senegal's exports, the note that production exceeded exports by about a fifth because cultivators retained roughly twenty per cent for seed and subsistence, and the attribution of postwar growth to the roads and the Thiès–Kayes railway with its Guinguinéo–Kaolack branch, are all from the survey of groundnut production and export published in the *Annales de Géographie* in 1930, consulted via Persée; **the point-year figures from a second series (51,600 tonnes in 1895, 140,000 in 1900, 224,000 in 1909, 303,000 in 1914, 275,000 in 1918) are given alongside rather than merged with the quinquennial averages, since the two are differently constructed and should not be spliced.** The comparison of French West African exports with Indian exports in 1928 (430,000 against more than 700,000 tonnes) is from the same secondary literature. The account of the *traite*, the advance-credit chain and the buying oligopoly follows Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and the standard economic histories; the 1946 market-capitalisation figure for the SCOA and the CFAO (about 84 per cent of listed French West African corporations on the Paris exchange) is Dresch's, reported as published. Head tax proportions follow Gastellu (sixty to seventy per cent of direct taxation by 1952) and the recent quantitative work on colonial public finance. **The module's central accounting claim — that the colonies of French West Africa were on average a net subsidiser of the French government up to the Second World War, and became net recipients only with FIDES — is Élise Huillery's (2014), as reported in the subsequent comparative work on British and French West African colonial public finances, and is presented as the current scholarly finding rather than as a settled fact; it is the kind of claim that revision could move, and a study resting weight on it should say so.** The characterisation of FIDES as substantially more than an ideological fig leaf is Paul Nugent's; René Dumont's 1962 criticism that the sums were modest against the need, and that forty-six per cent of FIDES grants went to roads, ports and airports, is noted from the same source and is not quoted at length. The remuneration of canton chiefs by rebate on tax collected follows the standard administrative literature. The characterisation of offerings to the Sufi orders as given rather than levied is the study's own reading and is offered as such.

WRITTEN IN AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

Module 7 · information — whether a republic founded on the free communication of thought could keep its metropolitan public from noticing what was done in its name; the censorship it imposed, the direction it pointed, the hole it left in the wall at Saint-Louis, and why the truth got out repeatedly and changed almost nothing

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The clause the Republic was proudest of

France in 1881 gave itself one of the freest press regimes in the world, and did it in language of some grandeur. The law of 29 July 1881 opens flatly:

> *L'imprimerie et la librairie sont libres.*
>
> ("Printing and bookselling are free.")

And its fifth article removes the machinery of control by name:

> *Tout journal ou écrit périodique peut être publié, sans autorisation préalable et sans dépôt de cautionnement…*
>
> ("Any newspaper or periodical may be published, without prior authorisation and without the lodging of a surety…")

No prior authorisation. No security deposit. No censorship. The offence of opinion abolished, on the rapporteur's principle that the law punishes only acts and thought is not an

act. Behind it stood article 11 of the Declaration of 1789: *la libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme* — the free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man — every citizen may accordingly speak, write and print freely, subject only to answering for abuse of that freedom in cases determined by law.

This is the Republic at its best, and it is not a pose. The 1881 law is still in force. And it is the reason this module cannot tell the story a reader expects, because a state that has said all that in its own founding texts has made a particular kind of trouble for itself the moment it starts governing fifteen million people it does not intend to admit.

The clause they wrote for Africa

Forty years later the same Republic issued, for French West Africa, a decree of 4 August 1921 that reversed every one of those provisions — not for Frenchmen in France, but for Africa. It prohibited the circulation of publications, whether by Africans or by Frenchmen, that called the colonial system into question or constituted "toute excitation des indigènes à la révolte contre l'autorité française" — any incitement of natives to revolt against French authority. And it added the provision that gives this module its title: *la publication de tout journal ou écrit périodique rédigé en langue indigène ou en langue étrangère ne pourra avoir lieu sans autorisation préalable du gouverneur général* — the publication of any newspaper or periodical written in an indigenous language or a foreign language may not take place without the prior authorisation of the governor-general.

Set the two texts side by side and the shape of the thing becomes visible. *Sans autorisation préalable* in Paris, 1881. *Sans autorisation préalable du gouverneur général* in Dakar, 1921 — the identical phrase, with the negation removed and a censor's name inserted. The Republic did not abandon its

principle. It kept the principle and drew a line on a map beyond which it did not run.

But look at what the decree actually targets, because this is the module's first real finding and it inverts the natural assumption. The prior-authorisation requirement does not fall on all publications in French West Africa. It falls specifically on those *rédigés en langue indigène ou en langue étrangère* — written in an African language, or in a language other than French.

A newspaper printed in Wolof or Bambara has, by definition, an African readership and no metropolitan one. A pamphlet in Arabic circulating among clerics reaches marabouts and not deputies. The censorship France built for West Africa was pointed inward: its object was to prevent Africans from communicating with one another, and with the wider Muslim world, in words no French official could read at a glance. The second clause — banning material that questioned the colonial system or incited revolt — reinforces the same reading, since the danger named is revolt, which is something the ruled do, and not scandal, which is something the metropole feels.

France was not, in the main, afraid that Frenchmen would find out. It was afraid that Africans would organise. That is a different fear, it produces different machinery, and it explains why the wall was built where it was.

The hole at Saint-Louis

And it explains why the wall had a hole in it that France never closed, though it knew perfectly well where it was.

The Four Communes were French communes. Their inhabitants were, however contestedly, French citizens. And so the law of 1881 applied there — not by anyone's generosity but by the logic of the fiction France had chosen to maintain. The recognition of French citizenship in the four communes of

Saint-Louis, Gorée, Rufisque and Dakar permitted the application, at least in part, of the new press legislation of 1881, with the consequence that it is in Senegal that the French-language African press first develops — the métis families acting as its initiators.

Consider what that meant in practice. Inside four municipal boundaries on the Senegalese coast, an African could publish a newspaper without asking anybody's permission, criticise the administration in print, be defended by an African lawyer in a French court, and send his complaint to a deputy who sat in the Chamber in Paris with parliamentary immunity. Outside those boundaries the governor-general could suppress a leaflet for being written in Wolof.

The Senegalese made full use of it. The first publication of francophone black Africa was *Le Moniteur du Sénégal*, founded at Saint-Louis in 1856 by Faidherbe — an official gazette, and a reminder that the colonial press begins as an instrument of the administration. But by the 1920s the field was contested. Blaise Diagne founded *La France coloniale* in 1927, a republican-socialist weekly which became the *Franco-Sénégalais Indépendant* in 1934; and papers opposed both to Diagne and to the administration existed alongside it, notably *L'AOF*, a weekly bought in 1924 by the lawyer Lamine Guèye, whose publication was interrupted from 1932 to June 1935. Financing difficulties limited the average life of such papers to three or four years — which tells you these were fragile enterprises, not a fourth estate, but they existed, they were African-owned, and they could not lawfully be shut for what they said.

Here is the structural point, and it connects directly to the citizenship this study has been tracking. France had made a few thousand Africans into citizens partly as a demonstration — the living proof that the doctrine of assimilation was not a fraud. Citizenship, however, is not a costume. It came with the 1881 law attached, and with a deputy attached, and with

courts attached. **The exhibit could talk back, and did.** France never resolved this, because the only way to close the hole was to withdraw the citizenship, and withdrawing it would have destroyed the exhibit — which is why the attacks on originaire status, when they came, were always made through the courts on technical grounds of who counted as an originaire, and never by frontal repeal.

What got through

So did the metropolitan public find out? Repeatedly, and in detail, and from unimpeachable sources.

In 1927 André Gide published *Voyage au Congo*, followed in 1928 by *Retour du Tchad*, describing what he had seen of concessionary company practice and forced recruitment in Equatorial Africa. He was not a pamphleteer; he was the most respected literary figure in France, publishing in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. The books caused a serious controversy, and it reached the Chamber, where a deputy sought to draw attention to the pitiable situation of workers in the colonies, notably on the Brazzaville railway, where recruitment was carried out by constraint.

In 1929 Albert Londres published *Terre d'Ébène*, and there was no ambiguity at all about what he had seen on the Congo–Océan line:

> *Dix-sept mille morts, sous les coups de la meute hystérique des contremaîtres européens et de leurs tirailleurs sénégalais, eux-mêmes exténués par les épidémies.*

> ("Seventeen thousand dead, under the blows of the hysterical pack of European foremen and their Senegalese riflemen, themselves worn out by the epidemics.")

That was printed in France, by a celebrated journalist, in a book that sold, four years before the Colonial Exposition opened its gates. Nor was he alone: Londres, Gide and Mar-

cel Homet among others deplored the abuses and testified to the devastating human effects of the Congo–Ocean railway project, while organisations such as the League for the Rights of Man regularly denounced the timber and rubber companies, and the criticisms — whether from the League of Nations, from journalists, or from concerned travellers — turned international opinion on Central Africa.

The record is unambiguous. The information was obtained, published, debated in Parliament, and internationally amplified. There was no successful concealment.

And why it did not matter

Now the uncomfortable part.

Londres published in 1929. Gide in 1927. Forced labour in French Africa was abolished in 1946 — seventeen years and nineteen years later respectively. The second portion of the contingent, men conscripted into work brigades, was created by decree in 1926 and ran on through the whole period of the scandal and out the other side. The Colonial Exposition, two years after *Terre d'Ébène*, sold thirty-three million tickets, while the counter-exhibition three miles away, mounted precisely to say what Londres had said, was seen by four thousand two hundred and twenty-six people.

The interwar years, in the assessment of the historians of colonial labour, brought some change, but no revolution in labour practices.

So the answer to the question this module exists to ask has two halves, and both should be stated without softening. Did France manage to keep its metropolitan public from knowing that the colonies were run on terms incompatible with the Rights of Man? No. It did not manage it, and — outside the specific matter of African-language publication in Africa — it did not seriously try, because the instruments to try with had been abolished by its own most celebrated statute. Did the

gap between the rhetoric and the practice survive anyway? Completely, for another generation.

The mechanism of survival was not secrecy. It was the ordinary structure of attention. The scandal reached a public which was neither deceived nor especially troubled — which had other things to think about, which encountered the pleasant version of the empire in the newspaper it already bought and at an exhibition it visited with its children, and which would have had to make a deliberate effort to seek out the other version. Sustaining a comfortable belief requires no censorship if the uncomfortable evidence, though freely available, must be actively looked for.

And there was a further defence, subtler and more effective than suppression, which is that the scandals were always somewhere else. Gide and Londres wrote about Equatorial Africa and the Congo–Océan. Senegal, with its citizens and its deputy and its schools, was the part of the empire one pointed to. An empire large enough to contain both an exhibit and an atrocity can concede the atrocity as an aberration and keep the exhibit as the rule — and does not need to lie about either.

The regime finally lifted in the same season as everything else: a decree of 27 September 1946 removed the restraints on press freedom in the French empire, and African newspapers immediately became a principal vehicle of nationalist demand. Twenty-five years of prior authorisation ended when the arrangement it protected was ending anyway.

What the wall was for

Three findings.

First: the censorship was pointed at the ruled, not at the metropole, and the wording says so. The 1921 decree for French West Africa restored prior authorisation specifically for periodicals written in an African or foreign language,

and banned material inciting natives to revolt. Both clauses target communication *among the governed*. **The natural assumption — that a ruling power's information control exists to keep the truth from its own public — is not what this apparatus was built to do.** France's rulers were far more afraid of a pamphlet in Wolof circulating between Kaolack and Touba than of an article in *Le Matin*, and they were probably right to be, because the pamphlet could produce a rising and the article could produce, at most, a debate. Read a censorship regime for the language it names and you will find the audience the rulers actually feared.

Second: an order that displays a privileged minority as proof of its own generosity cannot then deny that minority the rights the proof consists of. The Four Communes had the 1881 press law, African-owned newspapers, African lawyers and a deputy with parliamentary immunity, because France had chosen to make their inhabitants citizens and citizenship is not severable. **The exhibit talks back; that is what makes it an exhibit rather than a photograph.** France tolerated this for sixty years not from liberality but because the alternative — repealing the originaires' status — would have destroyed the demonstration the whole colonial doctrine rested on. Which is a general point worth carrying: **a ruling order's showpiece concession is also its permanent structural leak, and it cannot plug the leak without discarding the showpiece.**

Third, and the hardest: the gap between what a state says at home and what it does abroad does not require concealment to survive. The evidence was published by the most respected writer in France and by its most famous reporter, debated in the Chamber, denounced by the League for the Rights of Man and raised at the League of Nations — and forced labour continued for another seventeen years. Two years after *Terre d'Ébène*, thirty-three million tickets were sold to see the empire in a Paris wood. **What holds such a gap open is not that the public is prevented**

from knowing but that it is not required to; the effort of finding out is small and the incentive to make it is smaller, and a comfortable account that arrives unbidden will beat an uncomfortable one that must be sought. A study of information control that looks only for censors will therefore miss the mechanism. The censors were busy at the wrong end of the wire, and the wall they did not build was the one that held.

A note on sources. Three primary texts are quoted in the original with translation, and their provenance is uneven; the differences are flagged rather than smoothed. The law of 29 July 1881 on the freedom of the press (article 1, "*L'imprimerie et la librairie sont libres*"; article 5, "*Tout journal ou écrit périodique peut être publié, sans autorisation préalable et sans dépôt de cautionnement*") is quoted from the consolidated text on Légifrance, cross-checked against the French Senate's own historical account of the law; article 11 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 26 August 1789 is given in paraphrase and short quotation from the same source. **The decree of 4 August 1921 for French West Africa is quoted from a single reproducing source and must be collated against the *Journal officiel de l'AOF* before compilation**; the two clauses quoted ("*toute excitation des indigènes à la révolte contre l'autorité française*", and the requirement of prior authorisation from the governor-general for any periodical "*rédigé en langue indigène ou en langue étrangère*") are load-bearing for this module's central finding, and if the wording proves to differ the finding must be re-examined. **Albert Londres's sentence from *Terre d'Ébène* (1929) is likewise quoted from a single reproducing source**; Londres died in 1932 and the text is public domain, the line is reproduced identically across the French press and the anti-colonial literature, and it should be collated against the 1929 Albin Michel edition. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The account of the Senegalese press — the founding of *Le Moniteur du Sénégal* at Saint-Louis in 1856 by Faidherbe as the first publication of francophone black Africa; the partial application of the 1881 press law in the four communes following the recognition of citizenship there (Rufisque from 1880, Dakar from 1887); the métis families as initiators of the African French-language press; Blaise Diagne's *La France coloniale* of 1927 becoming the *Franco-Sénégalais Indépendant* in 1934; Lamine Guèye's purchase of *L'AOF* in 1924 and its interruption from 1932 to June 1935; and the three-to-four-year aver-

age life of such papers for want of financing — follows the standard press histories of francophone Africa, paraphrased. André Gide's *Voyage au Congo* (1927) and *Retour du Tchad* (1928) are named and described but not quoted, Gide having died in 1951; the parliamentary intervention on the Brazzaville railway is quoted only in translation from a reproducing source and is not presented as collated French. The observation that Londres, Gide and Marcel Homet were joined by the League for the Rights of Man, the League of Nations and the Comintern in publicising conditions in Equatorial Africa, and that the interwar years brought change but no revolution in labour practice, follows the recent scholarship on French African labour, paraphrased. The decree of 27 September 1946 lifting restraints on press freedom in the French empire is as reported in the scholarly literature on the African colonial press and is not quoted. Figures recurring from earlier in this study — the thirty-three million tickets sold to the 1931 Colonial Exposition and the 4,226 visitors recorded by the prefecture of police at *La Vérité sur les colonies* — carry the same sourcing given there. **The module's central inference — that the 1921 decree's targeting of African-language publication reveals a fear of horizontal communication among the ruled rather than of exposure to the metropolitan public — is the study's own reading of the text's wording, not a claim any colonial official is here shown to have made.**

THE PACT OF BORDEAUX

Module 8 · the hierarchy and the default — how each rank was made to serve the whole by serving itself; where the arrangement did that well, where it did it badly, and what France did with the one man in the chain whose interests ran the other way

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

What a durable hierarchy has to solve

An order that must be actively defended is expensive and does not last. The orders that last are the ones where nobody has to defend them, because every person of consequence, in pursuing his own advantage, happens to hold his part of the structure up. The question to put to colonial Senegal is therefore not who gave the orders but whether the men at each rank were placed so that their own interest and the arrangement's survival pointed the same way — and where they were not.

France did this well in some places, badly in others, and in one place not at all. The badly and the not-at-all are the interesting parts, because they show what a colonial hierarchy cannot manufacture and must therefore go and rent.

The chain of command, and what each man was paid to want

At the top: Paris. The ministry of colonies, the Chamber, and behind them a public whose willingness to vote credits and accept African infantry was the thing the whole arrangement ultimately ran on. Their alignment was maintained by the story — the exposition, the mission, the exhibit — and by the accounts, which until 1940 showed the colonies as a net con-

tributor rather than a burden. A metropolitan deputy who defended the empire was defending a thing that cost his constituents nothing and flattered them.

Below: the governor-general at Dakar, and beneath him the lieutenant-governor of Senegal. Their position was defined by Van Vollenhoven's circular of 1917 in a sentence already quoted in this study and worth holding here for what it does to everyone below: there are not two authorities in the district, the French authority and the native authority; there is only one. The African chief has no power of his own of any kind and is an instrument, an auxiliary. That is not a description of a partnership. It is a specification for a hierarchy in which all authority is delegated downward from a single source and can be withdrawn at will.

Below that: the *commandant de cercle*, a Frenchman running a district the size of an English county, who was simultaneously the administrator, the police, the magistrate under the *indigénat*, and the tax authority. His career depended on two things being true in his annual report: that his district was quiet and that his tax was collected. Note what this aligns him to. It aligns him perfectly with the arrangement's survival and perfectly against reporting difficulty. A *commandant* who wrote honestly about unrest, or about a chief's extortion, or about a bad harvest, was writing a report that reflected on his own competence. The incentive at that rank produced not loyalty exactly but silence, and the silence flowed upward.

Below that: the canton chief, and here France built the alignment with real precision. He was appointed by the lieutenant-governor and removable at discretion. He assessed the tax. And a substantial part of his remuneration came as a rebate on the tax he collected. Consider what that single arrangement accomplishes. The assessor's income is a function of his assessment. No French official need supervise his diligence, because his diligence is his salary. He will pursue the

hidden granary and the undeclared son on his own account, in his own language, among his own neighbours, and the administration will never have to know how.

It is an elegant piece of design and it has one catastrophic defect, which is that it purchases behaviour and destroys standing. The precolonial *damel* had been elected by a council and held authority his people acknowledged. His colonial successor held authority nobody acknowledged, exercised on behalf of foreigners, funded by a percentage of what he took from his neighbours. A colonial inspector named Maret put the position exactly in a report of 1930: the canton chief is not the continuator of the old native kinglet; even where the same man holds both offices nothing survives from the one state of affairs into the other; and though he be the descendant of the very king with whom France signed its treaty, he holds no power of his own, being appointed at French discretion and being only our auxiliary.

So the lowest rung of the French hierarchy was aligned by money and bankrupt of legitimacy. It produced compliance and it produced no belief whatever. That deficit is the hole this module is really about.

The parallel chain, and where it rubbed

Alongside the administration ran the commercial hierarchy, and the two were allies with a standing quarrel.

The trading houses — Maurel & Prom, Devès et Chaumet, Buhan et Teisseire, then Peyrissac, Vézia, Chavanel, then the CFAO and the SCOA — needed the tax collected, because the tax was what compelled the peasant to grow a saleable crop and sell it in a hurry. They needed the railway, which the administration built. They needed order, which the administration kept. And they had bought the conquest in the first place, having petitioned for it by name in 1851 and 1854. On the fundamentals they and the administration wanted the same country.

But their interests diverged on price. The administration wanted revenue, and revenue meant taxes on trade as well as on heads. The houses wanted low duties, cheap labour, and no interference in the terms of the *traite*. The colonial budget's needs and the merchants' margins came out of the same peasant, and the two parties argued about him for eighty years. This is ordinary and it is not a crack in the arrangement — a coalition whose members squabble over shares while agreeing on the source is a stable coalition, and the squabble is evidence of confidence rather than of strain.

The one man facing the other way

Now the defect, and it was structural, and France knew it.

The Four Communes elected a deputy to the Chamber. That deputy was elected by an African and métis electorate on a single-college universal male franchise. His power came from his voters. And his voters' interest was in more rights, wider citizenship, and less arbitrary administration — which is to say, in changing the arrangement rather than defending it. Every other rank in the hierarchy was paid, promoted or licensed by someone above; this one was elected from below by the governed. The incentive at that rank pointed backwards.

For a while the seat was held by Frenchmen and creoles who could be relied upon. Then, on 10 May 1914, it was won by Blaise Diagne, and the defect became live. He campaigned as an independent socialist, and he campaigned against the merchants: he attacked the Bordeaux monopolies as "ces requins qui prétendent vivre du Sénégal en le fermant par une réclame menteuse à des concurrents de bonne volonté" — those sharks who claim to live off Senegal by shutting it, with lying publicity, against competitors of good will.

Two years later he delivered the law of 29 September 1916 confirming that the originaires of the four communes and their descendants are and remain French citizens. That is a

permanent, real, legally enforceable gain, extracted from a wartime government by a man with almost no leverage except the one he used, which was his constituents' willingness to be conscripted like Frenchmen. Nothing that follows takes it away from him.

And in 1918 he took the recruiting mission, travelled the federation from Dakar to Bamako, and produced, on the figures usually given, sixty-three thousand men in French West Africa and fourteen thousand in Equatorial Africa. He did it partly on promises — medals, uniforms, adequate rations, and citizenship for the men who fought — of which the last was honoured for almost nobody. He also did it with help, and the identity of the helpers is the hinge of this module: he obtained those recruits with the support of the Murid and Tijani leaders Ahmadou Bamba and Malick Sy.

The pact

The absorption came five years later, and it has a name.

In 1923 Diagne signed, with the leading names of Bordeaux commerce, what is called the Pact of Bordeaux. In order to guarantee Senegal's economic development, Diagne undertook to cease all opposition to the great French trading companies and to reconcile his supporters with the French firms. The agreement was negotiated in secret, and it discredited him in the eyes of the Young Senegalese. It also worked: he won the elections of 1924, 1928 and 1932, on the durable support of the ex-servicemen, the Lebu, the Bordeaux trade and the colonial administration.

Read that list of four supports. Two of them are the people he was elected to represent. The other two are the parties he had been elected to fight.

What followed is on the record and should be stated without softening. In 1927, in a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, Diagne went so far as to deny the existence of forced labour

in French black Africa; he did the same as a member of the French delegation to the international conference organised by the International Labour Office at Geneva, where he defended French colonisation against the delegations of the other European colonial powers. He represented France at the International Labour Office in 1930, and from January 1931 to February 1932 he was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies — the first Black African to hold ministerial office in a French government — and in that capacity he inaugurated the Colonial Exposition alongside President Doumer.

The man who in 1914 called the Bordeaux houses sharks stood at Geneva in 1930 and told the assembled colonial powers that there was no forced labour in French Africa, in the same decade in which the second portion of the contingent was being marched onto the road gangs by decree.

Judge this with care, because both easy verdicts are wrong. Diagne was not a fraud: he won his people a citizenship they held until independence and used to build a politics. Nor was he a martyr to circumstance: he made choices, took office, and said things at Geneva that he had reason to know were untrue. What the sequence demonstrates is a mechanism, and the mechanism is the point of this module. **The hierarchy's one misaligned rank was not suppressed. It was re-aligned by purchase — an election guaranteed, a career opened, a ministry offered — until the incumbent's self-interest pointed the same way as everyone else's.** France did not need to abolish the African deputy. It needed only to make being the African deputy profitable on terms that required defending the arrangement.

And the cost of that method is visible immediately afterwards, in the young Senegalese who never trusted the seat again, and in the emergence of the men — Lamine Guèye, and after him a generation trained in French schools — who would take the same office and refuse the same bargain.

The rented chain

Which leaves the thing France could not build, and here the arrangement's real load-bearing member turns out not to be French at all.

The colonial hierarchy could purchase behaviour at every rank. It could not purchase belief anywhere. The canton chief was obeyed because he could summon a *garde de cercle*, not because anyone thought he ought to be obeyed. The *commandant* was a stranger. The deputy was in Paris. Between the administration and a million cultivators there was, in the strict sense, no legitimate authority at all.

The Sufi orders had exactly what was missing, and had it in a form France could never have manufactured, because it rested on a religious claim France could not make and a history of resistance to France that was itself part of the credential. A Murid disciple obeyed his sheikh because he believed his sheikh's instruction bore on his soul. That is a different substance from fifteen days and a hundred francs.

The conversion of this into an alliance took about fifteen years and it was not planned. Ahmadou Bamba was exiled in 1895 — on a report which, as the administration's own justification concedes, established no preaching of holy war against him, only that his attitude and his conduct and above all those of his principal disciples were suspect in every respect. He was deported to Gabon, then to Mauritania, then confined at Thiéyène, then held at Diourbel until his death in 1927. And at some point in that sequence the administration worked out what it had. On the standard Senegalese account, after 1910 the French authorities realised that Bamba did not want war; and from then on, since his doctrine served them, they decided to collaborate with him. France offered him the Légion d'honneur. He refused it — a refusal that mattered, because a decorated marabout would have been worth less to everybody, including France.

The terms that emerged were never written as a treaty and were all the more durable for it. The brotherhood received land on the groundnut frontier, rail access into the new country, and non-interference in its internal affairs. France received groundnuts in growing tonnage, tax collected without a French hand touching it, order kept without a French policeman, recruits when it asked in 1918, and — decisively, later — a countryside that voted as its marabouts advised.

Note that nothing in this arrangement required anybody to be insincere. The marabout who told his disciples to grow peanuts, pay their tax and avoid politics was pursuing the brotherhood's own interest: land, followers, wealth, autonomy and the freedom to teach. The disciple who obeyed was pursuing his salvation. Neither was defending French rule. Both were, in effect, holding it up. **That is the default in its purest observable form — a structure in which the parties who actually sustain the order have no intention of sustaining it and would be doing exactly the same things if they had never heard of France.**

Where the alignment held and where it failed

Four findings, and the third is the one this case contributes.

First: paying a man a percentage of what he extracts aligns him perfectly and delegitimises him completely. The canton chief's remuneration by rebate on the tax he assessed is the most efficient supervision device in the whole colonial apparatus — it converts the administration's problem into the chief's income and requires no oversight at all. It also converts an office his grandfather had held by acknowledged right into a commission on his neighbours' harvest. **An incentive that produces perfect compliance at a rank may be destroying, at that same rank, the only thing that would have made compliance cheap** — and a hierarchy which does this all the way down will find, when it

needs someone the people actually believe, that it has systematically eliminated such people from its own structure.

Second: an incentive that rewards quiet blinds everyone above it. The *commandant de cercle* was promoted for a peaceful district and a full tax roll, which means every rank above him received a picture of the colony assembled by men whose careers depended on the picture being calm. The arrangement was therefore best informed about the things that did not threaten it and worst informed about the things that did. **A hierarchy aligned by career incentive at its middle ranks purchases its coherence with its own eyesight.**

Third, and the finding: where a hierarchy cannot generate legitimacy internally, it will rent it externally, and the rented supplier ends up load-bearing. France built a chain in which every African link was paid, appointed and removable, and none was believed. The gap was filled by an institution France had spent thirty-two years trying to suppress, whose founder it exiled three times and then decorated, and which it finally accommodated on the plain calculation that his doctrine served it. The result held Senegal for half a century. But note the structural position this creates: **the party supplying legitimacy on contract is the only party in the hierarchy that can withdraw and survive** — the chiefs could not, the deputy could not, the houses could not, but the brotherhoods had their own following, their own revenue and their own claim, and had all three before France arrived and would have all three after it left. A default assembled this way is stable exactly as long as the rented member's interest points the same way, and it does not fail by rebellion. It fails by renegotiation.

Fourth: the standard method for a rank that faces the wrong way is absorption, not removal. The African deputy's incentives ran against the arrangement by design, and France's answer was not to abolish the seat — which

would have destroyed the exhibit the whole colonial doctrine rested on — but to make the seat worth holding on terms that required its holder to defend the arrangement. The Pact of Bordeaux is that transaction in explicit form, signed in secret in 1923, followed by three guaranteed elections, a denial of forced labour in the Chamber, a defence of French colonisation at Geneva, and a ministry. **A well-built hierarchy does not eliminate its dissenting rank; it promotes it, because a dissenter inside the coalition is worth more than a silenced one outside it** — and the price is that everyone watching learns what the office is for. The Young Senegalese drew exactly that conclusion, and the next generation of Senegalese politicians was formed by having watched the purchase.

A note on sources. Two primary quotations appear in the original with translation, both from single reproducing sources and both flagged for collation. Blaise Diagne's 1914 characterisation of the Bordeaux houses ("*ces requins qui prétendent vivre du Sénégal en le fermant par une réclame menteuse à des concurrents de bonne volonté*") is quoted as reproduced in a scholarly article on his 1914 campaign and should be checked against the campaign press, most likely *La Démocratie*, before compilation. The colonial administration's 1895 justification for Bamba's internment (that the report established no preaching of holy war, but that his attitude, his actions and above all those of his principal disciples were suspect in every respect) is given here in translation and paraphrase only, being available through a single reproducing source, and requires collation against the Privy Council record of 5 September 1895 in the Archives nationales du Sénégal. Joost van Vollenhoven's circular of 15 August 1917 and the inspector Maret's report of 1930 carry the sourcing given earlier in this study. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The Pact of Bordeaux of 1923 — Diagne's undertaking to cease opposition to the great French trading companies and reconcile his supporters with the French firms, its secret negotiation, its discrediting effect among the Young Senegalese, and his subsequent victories in 1924, 1928 and 1932 on the support of ex-servicemen, the Lebu, the Bordeaux trade and the administration — follows the *Encyclopædia Universalis* notice by Stéphanie Soubrier and the Senegalese historical press, paraphrased; **the pact was by its**

nature not published, and this study relies on the scholarly reconstruction of its terms rather than on a text. Diagne's denial of forced labour in the Chamber in 1927 and at the International Labour Office is reported from the same Senegalese historical literature and from the standard biographical record, which confirms his representation of France at the ILO in 1930 and his tenure as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies from January 1931 to February 1932; **the study reports these as attributed and does not quote his words at Geneva, not having collated them against the conference proceedings.** The 1918 recruitment figures (63,000 in French West Africa and 14,000 in Equatorial Africa, of whom some 45,000 reached Europe) are as commonly given in the French and Senegalese literature and are reported as such rather than as verified against the ministry's returns; **the Landscape and earlier modules of this study deliberately gave these as "tens of thousands," and the more precise figures are introduced here with that caveat attached.** The support of Ahmadou Bamba and El Hadj Malick Sy for the 1918 mission, the French offer of the Légion d'honneur to Bamba and his refusal of it, and the administration's post-1910 shift to collaboration on the calculation that his doctrine served French interests, follow the Senegalese biographical and scholarly record, paraphrased; the account of the resulting accommodation — land, rail access and non-interference in exchange for production, order and, later, electoral instruction — follows Donal Cruise O'Brien, Jean Copans, James Searing and David Robinson. The remuneration of canton chiefs substantially by rebate on tax collected follows the standard administrative literature. **The reading of the brotherhoods as the only member of the coalition able to withdraw and survive is the study's own inference from their independent following, revenue and authority, and is offered as such.**

SONT ET DEMEURENT

Module 9 · the liberty variable — a colony that held real elections for a century before any other, on a franchise granted by a republic, abolished by an empire, restored by a republic, confined to five per cent of the country, bought with conscription, and then narrowed by judges who ruled that the words "are and remain French citizens" could not be argued from

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The question this colony makes hard

Everywhere else in this collection, the question of whether the conquered had any lawful means of changing their condition has a short answer. In Senegal it does not, and the difficulty is the point of the module.

Senegal had genuine elections from 1848. It had an African and métis electorate voting on a single college with universal male suffrage. It had African municipal councillors, African mayors, an African lawyer defending clients in French courts, African newspapers, and from 1914 an African deputy sitting in the Chamber in Paris. It produced, by its own political means and against real resistance, two of the most significant pieces of legislation in the history of the French empire. None of this is decoration and none of it was given freely.

And for ninety-eight years it applied to about five per cent of the people who lived in the country.

So the honest question is not whether Senegal had a lawful channel — it plainly did, and a better one than any other African colony of any European power. It is what kind of

channel it was: how wide, on whose terms, revocable by whom, and what happened to it when it was used.

Granted, abolished, restored, abolished, restored

Begin with the fact that settles more than any other, because it establishes who actually controlled the door.

Colonial representation in the French parliament was abolished by the Constitution of the Year X. It was restored for the first time in 1848, Senegal and Guyane each electing a deputy. It was abolished again by the imperial decree of 2 February 1852. The Government of National Defence, counting on the republicanism of the colonies, restored it by the decrees of 8 and 15 September 1870, and Senegal — overlooked at first — obtained a deputy as Guyane did. That decision was then contested by an opposition which, relying on the low electoral turnout of these territories, seized the occasion of the vote on the constitutional laws to reduce their representation: excluded from the Senate, Senegal and Guyane also lost their deputies once again, despite vehement protest from the members elected in 1871. The general council was re-established by decree in February 1879, and the deputy's seat returned with the Third Republic's consolidation.

The historian of that sequence draws the conclusion in a single line: the existence of colonial representation is historically bound to the republican regime.

Hold what that means for the people of Saint-Louis. In 1848 they gained a deputy. In February 1852 they lost him, by decree, without having done anything at all. In September 1870 they regained him, without having done anything at all. Then they lost him again, in the constitutional settlement, over an argument about turnout conducted entirely in Paris. Their political rights rose and fell with the outcome of French domestic quarrels in which they had no part, and the strongest predictor of whether a Senegalese could vote in a given dec-

ade was not anything happening in Senegal but whether France was calling itself a republic that year.

The liberty available in a colony is a derivative of the metropole's own regime, and the colonised are not parties to the transaction. That is the first and most durable finding of this module, and it holds all the way to the end: the channel widened in 1848 with a revolution in Paris, widened again in 1946 with a defeat and a liberation in Europe, and closed in 1852 with a coup that no African had voted in.

What the channel actually was

Now the other side, stated at full strength, because it is genuinely remarkable and no other African territory had anything like it.

The four communes were French communes under the French municipal law of 5 April 1884. Their elections were held on universal male suffrage, on a single college, and the natives enjoyed the full right of suffrage without renouncing their personal status.

Take those three clauses one at a time, because each was extraordinary. A *single college* meant African and European votes counted in the same ballot box for the same seat — not the segregated double-college arrangement France used elsewhere and would use again in 1945. *Universal male suffrage* meant no property or literacy qualification. And *without renouncing their personal status* meant that a Muslim of Saint-Louis could vote in a French election on Sunday and be married, inherit and be buried under Muslim law — that he was not required, as every other candidate for French citizenship in the empire was required, to abandon his family arrangements to be counted as a man.

The scale was small but not trivial. In 1872, for a population of about 26,000 in the communes, there were 4,277 re-

gistered electors. These were real constituencies with real turnout, and the politics they produced was real politics: Galandou Diouf on the general council for Rufisque in 1907, Diagne's insurgent victory in 1914, the newspaper wars, the Young Senegalese, Lamine Guèye's law practice and his mayoralties.

And then the containment. The right to vote therefore concerned, until the Second World War, only five per cent of the inhabitants of the future territory of Senegal. Ninety-five per cent were subjects: liable to the *indigénat*, to the head tax, to the labour levy, to conscription, and possessed of no vote of any kind. Their "representation" was the arrangement of 1920, under which the colonial council seated men chosen from among chiefs appointed by the governor and required to speak French — of whom, in the whole colony, there were two or three.

So the channel was real, and it was a window in a wall. This is not a paradox to be resolved; it is the design. **The existence of a genuine, functioning, African-run democratic politics inside four municipal boundaries was what made the total exclusion of everyone else defensible.** France could point to Saint-Louis and say the doctrine was not a fraud, precisely because Saint-Louis was not a fraud.

A law extending the military law

The channel's greatest single achievement is also its most compromised document, and the compromise is visible in the paperwork.

By 1915 the originaires' status was under sustained legal attack. Their right to vote was long-established, but whether they were *citizens* — as opposed to natives with an anomalous local franchise — had become a live question in the courts, and the answer mattered because a non-citizen could be put under the *indigénat*. Diagne's solution was to trade

the one thing his constituents had that France wanted, which was their bodies.

The law of 29 September 1916 consists of a single article:

> *Les natifs des communes de plein exercice du Sénégal et leurs descendants sont et demeurent des citoyens français soumis aux obligations militaires prévues par la loi du 19 octobre 1915.*

> ("The natives of the communes of full exercise of Senegal and their descendants are and remain French citizens, subject to the military obligations provided for by the law of 19 October 1915.")

It was voted unanimously by both chambers, and signed at Paris by Poincaré.

Now read its title. The statute that is remembered as the charter of African citizenship in the French empire is formally entitled *loi étendant aux descendants des originaires des communes de plein exercice du Sénégal les dispositions de la loi militaire du 12 octobre 1915* — a law extending to the descendants of the originaires of the communes of full exercise of Senegal the provisions of the military law. And the legal scholarship reads the sequence exactly that way: the law of 19 October 1915 had subjected the originaires to military service but was drafted so as not to reach their descendants, and the 1916 legislator, in providing that the natives of the four communes are and remain French citizens, meant simply to fill that gap.

There is no reason to soften this. The most famous grant of rights in French colonial history was, on its own title page, a conscription measure. The rights were real, permanent and hard-won; they were also purchased, in the middle of a war, by a man delivering infantry, and the statute says so in its final clause. That is what a channel of this width can obtain:

not justice on the merits, but a trade at the moment the ruler needs something.

What the judges did with it

And then, having failed to prevent the law, its opponents narrowed it, without repealing a word.

The attack came through the courts and through personal status. It was argued that only the children of an originaire Muslim's first wife could be regarded as legitimate in French law, and that this interpretation would bring about the disintegration of the traditional African family with disastrous consequences for the whole of Senegal. The point of such an argument is not to abolish the citizenship but to shrink the set of people who can claim it, one succession case at a time.

The Court of Appeal of French West Africa did the rest. In a judgment of 4 December 1924 and in the decisions that followed it, the court held — on the question whether the estate of a Saint-Louis native, a French citizen under the 1916 law, fell to be settled under the Civil Code or under Muslim personal law — that the law of 29 September 1916 did not alter its case law; that no more than the 1830 promulgation of the Civil Code in Senegal or the law of 24 April 1833 had it the effect of imposing the status of French nationals on all the natives of Senegal; and that one could not argue to the contrary from the words "sont et demeurent citoyens français."

One could not argue, from the words *are and remain French citizens*, that they were French citizens.

That sentence deserves to stand on its own, because it demonstrates something a study of colonial law has to understand. **Foreclosure does not require repeal. It requires a court and time.** The statute survived intact, unanimously voted, never amended, and the interpretation ran the other way for the rest of the colonial period. A channel that can be narrowed by adjudication is a channel whose width is set by

whoever appoints the judges — and the judges of French West Africa were appointed from Dakar.

The irony that runs underneath is worth naming. The narrowing was accomplished by *preserving* Muslim personal status against the Civil Code — which was also the thing that made originaire citizenship uniquely generous, since nowhere else in the empire could one be a citizen and a Muslim in family law at once. The same doctrine that protected the originaire's marriage limited the reach of his citizenship. Both effects came from one rule, and one can defend the rule from either side.

Nineteen forty-six

Then, in a single season, the channel opened all the way, and it opened for the reasons everything else opened.

An ordinance of 22 August 1945 had provided that elections in overseas France would be held on a *double* college — on one side French citizens and those of the four communes, and on the other the "natives". Even at the moment of drafting a new republic's constitution, the vote was segregated.

Against that, Lamine Guèye — lawyer, mayor of Saint-Louis and then of Dakar, socialist deputy for Senegal-Mauritania in the Constituent Assembly — carried the law that bears his name. Voted by the Constituent Assembly on 25 April 1946 and promulgated on 7 May 1946 by Félix Gouin, president of the provisional government, it provided that from 1 June 1946 all subjects of the overseas territories, Algeria included, held the quality of citizen on the same footing as French nationals of the metropole and of the overseas territories. It ended the *indigénat*, the regime of summary administrative punishment that had run since the 1880s. It is sometimes compared to the edict of Caracalla, which in 212 extended Roman citizenship to the free inhabitants of the empire.

Ninety-eight years after the Republic first enfranchised the inhabitants of two sandbars, everyone else in French Africa was let in.

And the Senegalese historians who commemorate the law are also the first to qualify it. Its execution, they note, was limited in fact. Citizenship without the *indigénat* was an enormous gain, and the abolition of forced labour that same year was another. But the double college survived in the assemblies for years; the electorate widened by stages rather than at once; and a citizenship shared by fifteen million Africans and forty million Frenchmen inside one Republic raised a question about parliamentary arithmetic that France had no intention of answering honestly.

That question is what killed the arrangement. If the overseas territories were genuinely part of a single Republic on equal terms, their representation would eventually have had to reflect their numbers. Nobody in Paris was prepared to be governed by a chamber in which Africans held a proportionate share of the seats. So the alternatives narrowed to two: a federation of unequal partners, or separation.

The last vote

The choice was put in September 1958. De Gaulle's referendum offered the African territories membership of a French Community — or immediate independence, with the withdrawal of French administration and aid.

Guinea, under Sékou Touré, voted no, and the consequences were made instructive. Senegal voted yes; Lamine Guèye campaigned for the yes. Two years later, independence came anyway, negotiated rather than seized.

It is worth being clear about what the yes vote represented, because it is easy to read backwards as timidity. The men who cast it had spent their careers inside a lawful channel that had, over a century, actually delivered: a deputy, a

citizenship, the end of the *indigénat*, the abolition of forced labour. They had every reason from their own experience to believe that pressing the lever again would work again. That the channel had been five per cent wide for most of its existence, revocable by decree, and narrowed by courts, was equally true — and did not change the fact that it was the only lever that had ever moved anything in this country without bloodshed.

What the channel was worth

Four findings.

First: the width of a colonial channel is set in the metropole, by metropolitan politics, and the colonised are not consulted about it. Senegal's deputy was granted by a revolution in 1848, removed by an imperial decree in February 1852, restored by a provisional government in September 1870, removed again in a constitutional settlement, restored with the Third Republic, and universalised in 1946 after a war fought in Europe. At no point did anything Senegalese cause any of these changes. **A colonial franchise is not a right the ruled hold but a position the metropole occupies, and it moves when the metropole moves.** Which means that measuring an empire's liberality by what it granted is measuring the wrong thing: the question is whether the grant survived a change of government at home, and here it repeatedly did not.

Second: a real and functioning liberty for a small minority is the most effective possible defence of a total exclusion of everyone else. Nothing about the four communes was fraudulent. The single college was real, the universal male suffrage was real, the preservation of Muslim personal status was a genuine and unusual generosity, and the politics produced by that electorate was as vigorous as any in France. That is precisely what made it useful. **An order accused of denying rights is best defended not by a**

false claim that it grants them but by a true claim about a real place where it does — and the more genuine the exhibit, the less pressure there is to widen it. Five per cent, for ninety-eight years, is not a failure of the arrangement. It is the arrangement.

Third: a channel wide enough to obtain a trade is not wide enough to obtain justice, and the paperwork records which one happened. The 1916 law reads, in its operative clause, that the originaires and their descendants are and remain French citizens *subject to the military obligations provided by the law of 19 October 1915*, and it is formally entitled a law extending the provisions of the military law. The rights were genuine and they were bought, in wartime, by a man who had infantry to sell. **What a narrow lawful channel can extract is what the ruler happens to need at that moment, priced accordingly** — which is why colonial rights advance in wars and not in peace, and why the advances carry the war's terms inside them.

Fourth, and the one to carry: rights are foreclosed by interpretation far more often than by repeal. The law of 29 September 1916 was voted unanimously by both chambers, was never amended, and stands in the statute book to this day. Within eight years the Court of Appeal of French West Africa had held that one could not argue from the words *sont et demeurent citoyens français* that the persons named were French citizens — and that ruling, not the statute, governed for the remainder of the colonial period. **A written right whose interpretation lies with judges appointed by the party it constrains is a right held at that party's discretion, and the constraint can be dissolved without a single vote being taken.** A study looking for the moment a liberty was taken away will find no such moment. It will find a series of estate cases.

A note on sources. One primary text is quoted in the original with translation, and it is now collated. The single article of the law of 29 September 1916 ("*Les natifs des communes de plein exercice du Sénégal et leurs descendants sont et demeurent des citoyens français soumis aux obligations militaires prévues par la loi du 19 octobre 1915*") is given in the wording reproduced identically by the Digithèque MJP (Université de Perpignan) from the *Journal officiel*, by the French constitutional-law literature, and by the scholarship on wartime nationality legislation, which also confirms that it was voted unanimously by both chambers and signed by Poincaré; **an earlier module of this study flagged a variant reading beginning "Les originaires…" rather than "Les natifs…", and that variant does circulate, including in the Senegalese reference literature — the study adopts "Les natifs" as the wording of the enacted text on the strength of the concurring legal sources, and notes the variant rather than suppressing it.** The law's formal title ("*loi étendant aux descendants des originaires des communes de plein exercice du Sénégal les dispositions de la loi militaire du 12 octobre 1915*") and the reading of the 1916 statute as filling a drafting gap in the military law of 19 October 1915 follow the analysis in the *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, paraphrased. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The history of colonial parliamentary representation — abolition under the Constitution of the Year X, restoration in 1848, abolition by the imperial decree of 2 February 1852, restoration by the decrees of 8 and 15 September 1870, the subsequent loss of the deputies and exclusion from the Senate in the constitutional settlement despite the protest of the members elected in 1871, and the conclusion that colonial representation was historically bound to the republican regime — follows the study of Guyanese and Senegalese parliamentary representation under the Third Republic published in *Parlement[s]*, paraphrased. The municipal framework (the French municipal law of 5 April 1884 applying to the four communes; the general council re-established by decree of 4 February 1879; elections on universal male suffrage, single college, with personal status preserved; 4,277 registered electors in 1872 for a communal population of about 26,000, after Zuccarelli) is from the Digithèque MJP's Senegal dossier. The observation that the franchise reached only about five per cent of the inhabitants of the future territory of Senegal until the Second World War is from the standard reference literature on the Four Communes. **The judgments of the Court of Appeal of French West Africa are reported at second hand and should be collated against the law reports before compilation:** the decision of 4 December 1924 (*Compagnie d'électricité du Sénégal c. dame Segui M'baye*, Recueil Dareste, III, 1925) and the subsequent decision explicating it are quoted here

only in translation and paraphrase, from the *Revue française de droit constitutionnel* article, as is the argument that only the children of a Muslim originaire's first wife could be legitimate in French law. The Loi Lamine Guèye — proposed by the mayor of Dakar and socialist deputy for Senegal-Mauritania, voted by the Constituent Assembly on 25 April 1946, promulgated 7 May 1946 by Félix Gouin, in force from 1 June 1946, extending the quality of citizen to all subjects of the overseas territories including Algeria, and ending the *indigénat* — is as reported in the French and Senegalese press and reference literature on its eightieth anniversary; **the operative wording is given in translation only, not having been collated against the *Journal officiel*.** The ordinance of 22 August 1945 establishing the double college, and the qualification by Senegalese historians that the 1946 law's execution was limited in fact, are from the same sources. Lamine Guèye's biography and his campaign for the yes vote in the referendum of September 1958 follow the Maitron notice and the standard Senegalese record. **The characterisation of the Senegalese yes vote of 1958 as the reasonable inference of men whose lawful channel had repeatedly delivered is the study's own reading and is offered as such.**

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

THE WORD THEY LEFT IN ENGLISH

Module 10 · how it ended — not by a rising in the groundnut basin, which never came, but because the power that guaranteed the whole arrangement was beaten in six weeks by other Europeans, had to be rescued from Africa, and afterwards found the price of empire being set for it in Hanoi and Algiers

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

Nobody rose

Begin by disposing of the story that is not true. There was no Senegalese revolution. In a hundred and six years between Faidherbe's appointment and independence, the cultivators of the groundnut basin — taxed, levied for labour, conscripted, punished without trial, and locked into a single crop at a price they did not set — did not once rise in a general revolt against French rule and never came close to it.

This is not a failure of Senegalese courage, and the study has already given the reasons. The man in the village had a chief who was his neighbour, a punishment calibrated at fifteen days and a hundred francs, a fiscal obligation with exactly one lawful discharge, an open border that led to an identical arrangement under a different flag, and an internal exit into a brotherhood that would take him in and keep him on the tax roll. Every one of those arrangements was cheaper for him than a rising, and rationally so.

So when the arrangement ended, it ended for reasons that had almost nothing to do with him. What follows is a se-

quence of events among elites — French elites, mostly, and then German ones, and then American, Vietnamese and Algerian ones — in which the price France was willing to pay to keep West Africa was revised downward by parties who had never been there.

The year the guarantor was beaten

The single most important event in the history of French West Africa took place in northern France in the spring of 1940.

The whole structure of the colony rested on a proposition that had never been tested in the lifetime of anyone living: that France was among the strongest powers on earth, that its authority was a fact of nature, and that no African arrangement could survive against it. In six weeks the German army disposed of that proposition in front of the entire world, including in front of the roughly hundred and fifty thousand African soldiers who were serving France at the time and the tens of thousands who were captured.

Some of them learned it in a more specific way. In June 1940, at Chasselay near Lyon, Wehrmacht units massacred tirailleurs who had surrendered — an atrocity the Senegalese remember at the *Tata* built over the graves. The men of the colonial army discovered simultaneously that France could be beaten and that being France's soldier did not confer France's protections.

Then the humiliation compounded. French West Africa went to Vichy under Governor-General Pierre Boisson. In September 1940 a British and Free French force appeared off Dakar and attempted to take the port; the Vichy garrison — French officers, African troops — fought them off. Africans in Senegal watched Frenchmen shell Frenchmen over possession of their country, and watched the men who governed them swear allegiance to a regime that had been installed by the

German victory. Only after the Allied landings in North Africa in the autumn of 1942 did French West Africa change sides.

Meanwhile the Free French movement had made its territorial base in Africa. Chad rallied to de Gaulle in the summer of 1940 under Félix Éboué — a Black man from Guyane, governing a French colony, who delivered it to the Free French before most of metropolitan France had made up its mind. Brazzaville, in Equatorial Africa, became the capital of Fighting France. De Gaulle would later call it the refuge of French honour and independence.

Consider what that inverts. For eighty-six years the arrangement had rested on the proposition that France conferred civilisation on Africa. In 1940 Africa conferred on France the territory, the revenue and the soldiers without which it would have had no existence as a belligerent at all. Nobody in Dakar needed this explained to them.

The word they left in English

Which is the context for the conference that is usually presented as the beginning of decolonisation and is better understood as the last serious attempt to prevent it.

The African Conference met at Brazzaville from 30 January to 8 February 1944 — governors, administrators, commercial representatives, members of the Consultative Assembly, convened by René Pleven with Éboué and Henri Laurentie, under de Gaulle's authority. It produced real reforms, including the decision to abolish the *indigénat*. And its recommendations open with a sentence placed before any of them, which settles what the exercise was for:

> *Les fins de l'œuvre de civilisation accomplie par la France dans les colonies écartent toute idée d'autonomie, toute possibilité d'évolution hors du bloc français de l'Empire ; la constitution éventuelle, même lointaine, de self-governments dans les colonies est à écarter.*

> ("The ends of the work of civilisation accomplished by France in the colonies set aside any idea of autonomy, any possibility of development outside the French bloc of the Empire; the eventual establishment, even in the distant future, of self-governments in the colonies is to be set aside.")

The phrase to look at is *self-governments*, which stands in the French text in English, italicised, unnaturalised and grammatically abused with a French plural. The historians who examined this text at a colloquium in 1987 noted the oddity from both sides: the British participants found the term hard to construe as the French were using it, and it was, in the French of the day, effectively untranslatable.

A state announcing the future of fifteen million people had to borrow a word from the empire it was competing with in order to name the thing it was refusing them, because its own political vocabulary — built on a Republic, one and indivisible, in which the parts do not govern themselves — contained no term for it. The refusal is thus more revealing than a refusal in French would have been. France was not declining to grant African self-government; it lacked the concept, and had to import one to reject.

And the timing tells the rest. Jacques Marseille's assessment of the conference is that behind the myth lies an improvised administrative meeting, conceived in the last days of July 1943, to answer critical foreign scrutiny — that is, convened while the Atlantic Charter was being read around the world as the closing of the imperial era, and aimed at an audience in Washington and London rather than in Bamako.

The whitening, and the camp at Thiaroye

Two things happened in the autumn of 1944 that belong together.

The first was the operation the French army called *blanchiment* — whitening. As the Free French forces moved into France, African troops were withdrawn from the fighting divisions and replaced with newly available European volunteers, so that the units which liberated French towns and crossed into Germany were white. Men who had held the line since 1940 were pulled out of the columns before the parades.

The second happened at a transit camp fifteen kilometres from Dakar.

In November 1944 about twelve hundred and eighty African soldiers — from Senegal, Soudan, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, Haute-Volta, Togo, Gabon and Oubangui-Chari — were assembled at the camp of Thiaroye. They were former prisoners of war, most of them captured in 1940, returning after four years in German captivity, awaiting demobilisation. They were owed money: captivity back pay, demobilisation bonuses, the conversion of their accounts. The money did not come. They refused to disperse to their home territories until they were paid, understanding correctly that their only strength was that they were still together.

On the morning of 1 December 1944 the French army opened fire on them.

The official return was thirty-five dead, thirty-five wounded and thirty-four convictions. That figure is now impossible to accept as it stands, and the reasons are archival rather than polemical. Two versions of General Dagnan's report of 5 December survive in two different archival collections, one listing thirty-five victims and the other seventy. President Hollande acknowledged seventy at the seventieth anniversary in 2014. The Senegalese historian Mbaye Guèye counted a hundred and ninety-one. Martin Mourre and others have argued for several hundred, and that the operation was prepared rather than a sequence that got out of hand. A Sûreté report circulating after the event described some four

hundred tirailleurs deserting during a twenty-four-hour stop at Casablanca on the repatriation voyage — a claim which, if false, would have been a convenient way of accounting for men who were not deserters at all.

And there is a detail in the archive that does the work of a hundred arguments. General de Boisboissel's report of 5 December states that it was the Senegalese tirailleurs of the order detachment who caused almost all the dead and wounded, with rifles, and adds that the automatic weapons would have produced a slaughter. The unit-by-unit record of cartridges expended, drawn up before 5 December, contradicts him.

Two official inquiries were held — by General de Périer of the colonial troops on 5 February 1945, and by the colonial ministry inspector Louis Mérat on 15 March 1945. Despite requests from overseas deputies, Lamine Guèye among them, no parliamentary inquiry was ever opened. Thirty-four survivors were convicted in March 1945 and sentenced to between one and ten years, mostly for rebellion; they were released in the spring of 1947 and never pardoned. In July 2024 the French veterans' office determined that the tirailleurs killed at Thiaroye were entitled to the mention *Mort pour la France*, and six were so designated; that autumn President Macron acknowledged in writing that what happened was a massacre. In February 2025 the Senegalese government began excavations at the site to establish how many are buried there. As this study is written, the number is not known.

Set Thiaroye where it belongs in the structure of this order. The floor of French Senegal had been African since 1857, manned by men bought out of slavery or recruited from those with nothing, and it worked because the bargain was kept well enough. These were the only people to whom France had ever preached its doctrine in earnest, because theirs was the only belief the arrangement structurally re-

quired. At Thiaroye they presented the bill — itemised, modest, and consisting entirely of money they were owed — and were answered with machine guns and then with a falsified count.

That is what an order does when the one group whose consent it actually needs withdraws it. Not negotiation: maximum available violence, applied at once, followed by paperwork. And it is worth saying plainly that in the narrow sense it worked. There was no general mutiny. The army held. The colony continued for another sixteen years.

But something had been established that could not be unestablished, and every Senegalese political figure of the next generation knew the date.

Repriced somewhere else

Then the arrangement was revalued by events in which Senegal played no part at all.

In 1946 the whole apparatus of subjection was dismantled in a single season: the *indigénat* abolished, forced labour abolished, citizenship extended to all overseas subjects by Lamine Guèye's law, FIDES established, and money flowing into the colonies for the first time. This was not generosity discovered after ninety-two years. It was the price of holding an empire in a world where the Atlantic Charter had been signed, the United Nations existed, the United States was hostile to European colonialism, and France's own claim to be a great power depended on being seen to lead a modern Union rather than an old empire.

And then France discovered what that price actually was, in the two places where somebody was prepared to make it fight. The Indochina war ran from 1946 to the surrender at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. Algeria began in November 1954 and ran for nearly eight years. Between them they con-

sumed the French army, the French budget, and eventually the Fourth Republic itself.

Here the cheapness that had made Senegal such a satisfactory colony turned into the reason it could not be kept. There were no French settlers in Senegal to speak of — a few thousand in the towns, against a million settlers in Algeria. There was no French land to defend, because France had never taken any. There was a groundnut crop that could be bought on the open market from an independent government as easily as extracted from a colonial one. **A possession that costs nothing to hold is also a possession worth nothing to fight for**, and when the French army was fully committed in the Aurès, no minister was going to open a second front to retain a peanut basin that had never given anyone any trouble.

The loi-cadre of 1956 devolved real powers to territorial assemblies. In September 1958 de Gaulle offered the African territories membership of a French Community or immediate independence with the withdrawal of French support. Guinea alone voted no, and the manner of France's departure from Conakry was arranged to be instructive. Senegal voted yes. Two years later, after the brief experiment of the Mali Federation, it took independence anyway, in August 1960, by negotiation and without a shot.

What actually moved

Four findings.

First: nothing in this colony was changed by the people it was run on. No peasant rising, no general strike in the groundnut basin, no revolt worth the name in a century. The men who ended the arrangement were French ministers, French generals, German soldiers, American diplomats, Vietnamese and Algerian fighters, and a small number of African politicians operating inside French institutions. **The question to ask of any order's end is not what the ruled fi-**

nally did but which party above them changed its valuation, and why — and here the answer never once runs through the Senegalese village.

Second: the decisive blow to a colonial order can be struck in the metropole, by a third party, in a war the colony is not part of. France was beaten in six weeks in 1940 by another European power, governed thereafter by a regime installed by that defeat, shelled at Dakar by its own countrymen, and rescued from Africa by a Free French movement whose capital was Brazzaville and whose first territory was delivered by a Black governor. The proposition on which the whole arrangement rested — that French authority was simply a fact — was disproved in public, at no cost to any African, by Germans. **An order that rests on the appearance of the ruler's invincibility is hostage to every quarrel the ruler has with his equals**, and no amount of internal control can protect it from a defeat abroad.

Third: the one internal danger came from the armed body the order had made, over the terms of its own bargain. The cultivators never moved. The soldiers did — men who had been taught in a printed pidgin that a good rifleman always obeys, who had then been captured, imprisoned, and shipped home unpaid past their own memory of having held the line while the metropole collapsed. **A ruling order can be indifferent to the grievances of those it merely coerces and cannot be indifferent for a day to the grievances of those whose belief it actually requires** — and the proof is in the response, which was not concession but the maximum violence available and a falsified return.

Fourth: an order ends when its guarantor reprices it, and the repricing may be set entirely elsewhere. In 1944 France declared that self-government in the colonies was to be set aside even in the distant future, and it had to borrow an English word to say so. Twelve years later it was legislat-

ing devolution; sixteen years later Senegal was independent. Nothing had happened in Senegal. What had happened was Dien Bien Phu and the Aurès — the establishment, by Vietnamese and Algerians, of the actual price of holding a colony against people willing to pay. **The value of every other possession in an empire is reset by whichever one puts up the hardest fight, and possessions that are quiet and cheap are surrendered first, because there is nothing on the other side of the ledger to justify the new price.** Senegal's compliance had made it valuable to hold and worthless to keep.

A note on sources. One primary text is quoted in the original with translation. The opening formula of the recommendations of the Brazzaville Conference ("*Les fins de l'œuvre de civilisation accomplie par la France dans les colonies écartent toute idée d'autonomie…*") is reproduced consistently across the French scholarly and reference literature and is quoted here in that form; **a variant reading gives "*l'œuvre de colonisation*" for "*l'œuvre de civilisation*", and the study reports the variant rather than resolving it, the text requiring collation against the ministry's own published proceedings (*Conférence africaine française: Brazzaville, 30 janvier 1944–8 février 1944*, Ministère des Colonies, 1945).** The observation that the English term *self-government* was used untranslated and was regarded as difficult to construe by the British historians present at the 1987 Institut Charles-de-Gaulle colloquium, and Jacques Marseille's characterisation of the conference as an improvised administrative meeting conceived in late July 1943 in response to critical foreign scrutiny, are from Marseille's account in *Vingtième Siècle* (1987), paraphrased. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. **The Thiaroye figures are given as a live and unresolved dispute, and the study takes no position on the total.** The official return (35 dead, 35 wounded, 34 convictions) and the two surviving versions of General Dagnan's report of 5 December 1944 in separate archival collections, one giving 35 and the other 70; President Hollande's acknowledgement of 70 in 2014; Mbaye Guèye's count of 191; Martin Mourre's argument for several hundred and for premeditation; the Sûreté report of some 400 alleged deserters at Casablanca; and General de Boisboissel's report of 5 December 1944 attributing almost all casualties to rifle fire by the order detachment, contradicted by the

unit-by-unit record of cartridges expended drawn up before that date — all follow the published historical work on Thiaroye (Mourre, *Thiaroye 1944: histoire et mémoire d'un massacre colonial*, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017; Armelle Mabon; Julien Fargettas) and the synthesis literature, paraphrased; **none of these archival documents has been consulted directly by this study, and the cartridge-record point in particular should be verified at the Service historique de la Défense before compilation.** The contingent of about 1,280 men and its territorial composition, the two inquiries (General de Périer, 5 February 1945; Inspector Louis Mérat, 15 March 1945), the absence of any parliamentary inquiry despite requests from Lamine Guèye and other overseas deputies, the 34 convictions of March 1945 with sentences of one to ten years and the release without pardon in spring 1947, the ONAC decision of 18 July 2024 and the six *Mort pour la France* designations, President Macron's acknowledgement of a massacre in 2024, and the commencement of excavations announced by Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko in February 2025, are as reported in the French and Senegalese press and the scholarly literature. **A journal de marche deposited at the Service historique de la Défense in March 2025 by the son of an officer present at the camp is reported to support the official account, and the study notes this rather than omitting it; the matter is under active dispute among historians as this is written.** The massacre of surrendered tirailleurs at Chasselay in June 1940 and the *Tata* built over the graves follow the standard record. **The operation known as *blanchiment* in the autumn of 1944 is described here in general terms**, on the strength of the term's appearance in the colonial troops' own archival inventories, and the specifics of which units were affected and when have not been verified in this study. The figure of about 150,000 African troops engaged in the Second World War is as commonly given. The rally of Chad by Félix Éboué in 1940, the Vichy administration of French West Africa under Pierre Boisson, the Anglo-Free French attempt on Dakar in September 1940, and the rally of French West Africa after the North African landings of late 1942 follow the standard histories. The 1956 loi-cadre, the referendum of September 1958, Guinea's negative vote, the Mali Federation and Senegalese independence in August 1960 follow the standard record.

THIRTY-SIX YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS

Module 11 · the accounting — what a hundred and six years of French rule cost and what it built, set out in the units each was actually measured in, with the sum left where it belongs

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

Why this ledger will not balance

The temptation in a module like this is to produce a verdict — so many dead against so many kilometres of track, and a conclusion. It cannot be done honestly, and the reason is not squeamishness. The two columns are denominated in incommensurable units. A port is a port; a man shot at Thiaroye is not a quantity of anything. Nothing is gained by pretending that a figure for one can be set against a figure for the other and a remainder produced.

What can be done is to set both out fully, in the terms each was actually measured in, with the disputes intact and the gaps admitted. The arithmetic is the module. The sum is the reader's.

The number that summarises the rest

In 1950 — ninety-six years after Faidherbe took the government, four years after the *indigénat* was abolished, at the beginning of the only period in which France invested seriously in this country — life expectancy at birth in Senegal was 36.43 years.

The same series gives, for that year, a crude death rate of 28.1 per thousand, a total fertility rate of 6.79 children per

woman, and infant mortality of 148.6 deaths per thousand live births. Roughly one child in seven did not reach its first birthday. The population stood at about 2.5 million, reaching 3,048,000 by 1960.

Those are the conditions of life at the end, not the beginning. Whatever the century had been for, it had not been for this.

Two honest qualifications belong immediately beside them. The first is that these figures were not markedly worse than those of neighbouring territories under other flags, and were probably not worse than Senegal's own precolonial condition, of which we have no measurements at all. The second is that they were improving, quite fast, in exactly the last decade — which is the decade of FIDES, of the medical school, of the vaccination campaigns, and of the abolition of forced labour. Both qualifications are true. Neither turns 36.43 into a defensible outcome for a hundred years of administration by a state that told itself it was there to civilise.

What can be counted in the dead

Four distinct tolls, and only one of them has a figure this study is willing to state.

The Atlantic trade. For Senegambia as a whole, Boubacar Barry's estimate is that slavers operating from the region exported on the order of six thousand people a year through the eighteenth century. The study has already given the reasons for rejecting the twenty-million figure attached to Gorée, and for insisting that the correction is not a mitigation: six hundred thousand people from one stretch of coast in a century is the arithmetic, and the French on the islands bought, financed, shipped and — in the 1670s — fought a war to protect the system that supplied them.

The conquest. Nobody counted. The Waalo campaign of 1855 is variously given at over a hundred dead with a hundred and fifty to three hundred prisoners, and twenty-five to

more than forty villages burned; the campaigns of 1859 in Sine and the three invasions of Kajoor in 1861 have no reliable totals at all; the last damel, Lat Dior, died at Dékhelé in October 1886 with two sons and some seventy-eight companions. Beyond that the record is anecdote. **The study declines to give a figure for the dead of the French conquest of Senegal, because there is none.**

Forced labour. Similarly uncounted in Senegal. The one authoritative number in French Africa belongs to the Congo–Océan railway in Equatorial Africa, where Albert Londres reported seventeen thousand dead in 1929 — which is not a Senegalese figure and must not be borrowed as one. What is known for Senegal is the system: the *prestation* on every man between eighteen and sixty, the second portion of the contingent from 1926, the mobile penal road camps, and requisition, all running until 1946. What it cost in lives is not in the record.

The wars. French West Africa supplied something on the order of two hundred thousand men to the First World War, with dead commonly reckoned near thirty thousand; about a hundred and fifty thousand African troops were engaged in the Second. These are federation-wide figures, not Senegalese ones, and they are given here as orders of magnitude with the uncertainty explicit. To them belong the specific and datable killings: the surrendered tirailleurs massacred by the Wehrmacht at Chasselay in June 1940, and the men shot by the French army at Thiaroye on 1 December 1944, whose number is officially thirty-five, was acknowledged as seventy in 2014, was counted at a hundred and ninety-one by Mbaye Guèye, is argued by other historians to run into several hundred, and is at this moment the subject of excavations at the site.

What was built

Now the other column, and it should be given at full strength, because a study that minimises it is not describing the country that became independent.

The railway. The Dakar–Saint-Louis line, opened in 1885, and the Thiès–Kayes line running inland with its branch from Guinguinéo to Kaolack. Built to reach the groundnut and to break Kajoor, and both of those things are true and do not stop it being a railway. Independent Senegal inherited a functioning trunk network that it could not have built in its first decade.

The port. Dakar, developed from a fishing settlement into one of the major ports of Atlantic Africa and the federal capital from 1902. It remains the country's principal economic asset.

Medicine. The Pasteur Institute at Dakar, the African School of Medicine training African physicians and health officers for the whole federation, the yellow fever and smallpox campaigns, the sleeping sickness services. The declining death rate visible in the 1950s series is substantially their work.

Schools, in small numbers and of high quality. The William Ponty school, whose graduates staffed the administrations and then the governments of eight countries; the medical school; the lycées of Dakar and Saint-Louis. Senegal became, and remains, an educational centre for francophone West Africa.

The public works of the last fifteen years. From 1946, FIDES money into roads, ports, airfields, water, schools and hospitals — real transfers, on a scale the colony had never seen, in the period when French West Africa moved from being a net contributor to French public finances to being a net recipient.

And the institutions of a state. A civil service, a legal system, a currency, a functioning administration, and — uniquely in French Africa — a century of practice at electoral politics, a party system, a free press, and a political class experienced in parliamentary procedure. Senegal has never had a successful coup. That is not unrelated to Saint-Louis in 1848.

What was not built

Set beside it, in the same units where possible.

Education, in the aggregate. The top of the system was excellent and the base was nearly absent. A federation of fifteen million produced a few dozen William Ponty graduates a year. At independence the great majority of Senegalese adults could not read or write French, and the school system reached a minority of children. The literacy Senegal did possess was largely Qur'anic, in Arabic and in Wolof written in Arabic script, and it had been produced by institutions France spent a generation trying to suppress.

An economy that was not one crop. In 1930 groundnuts were more than nine-tenths of the value of Senegal's exports, and the position had not fundamentally changed at independence. There was no industrial base to speak of, no processing of consequence, and an agriculture that had been narrowed for eighty years until the country's food security depended on a world price. **Whatever else France built, it did not build an economy that could survive the thing it was built around.**

A trained administrative cadre in any depth. Sixteen or seventeen new French citizens a year between 1935 and 1949, in a federation of fifteen million. Two or three of Senegal's 435 canton chiefs able to speak French in the late 1920s, and an administration that had recorded the difficulties of educating them as too considerable to attempt. A country cannot be handed a state and simultaneously denied

the people to run it, and Senegal in 1960 was better supplied than most of its neighbours precisely because of the four communes — which is to say, because of an accident of the seventeenth century rather than any policy.

And the thing France undertook to build and did not. The whole justification, from Ferry to Reynaud, was a work of civilisation ending in assimilation. Sixteen a year is the measure of what was actually delivered.

The item that is not in either column

The largest single development in Senegal during the colonial century does not appear in French accounts at all, because France neither built it nor prevented it.

Islam completed its conquest. A creed that had been on the Senegal river since the 1030s and had been beaten three times by the warrior aristocracy became, in the two generations after that aristocracy was destroyed, the religion of essentially the entire country. The Sufi orders built what the colonial state did not: schools, communities, an agricultural frontier, mutual insurance, dispute resolution, and a moral order that people actually believed in. And they built a city. Touba, founded in the late 1880s by a man France exiled to Gabon, then to Mauritania, then held under guard at Diourbel until he died — Touba is now among the largest cities in Senegal, and grew fastest of all.

France built Dakar and got a capital. The man France spent thirty-two years trying to suppress built Touba, and got the country.

What cannot be entered

Some things belong in the account and cannot be quantified, and the honest procedure is to name them rather than to leave them out because they lack a figure.

The men at Thiaroye asked for money they were owed and were shot for it, and their number is still unknown eighty years later because the reports were falsified and the graves have not been opened. The tirailleurs of 1940 discovered in German captivity that the country they had fought for could not protect them, and returned to find themselves removed from the columns that liberated it. Four hundred and thirty-five canton chiefs were kept illiterate as a matter of calculated policy, and their children with them. A cultivator in Kaolack in 1931 watched his family's food security evaporate because of a price movement in a market he had never heard of. And a whole society spent a century being told, by the most articulate state in Europe, that the ladder was there and that it simply had not climbed it.

None of that has a number. All of it happened.

Reading the accounts

Three findings.

First: the two columns are not commensurable, and the demand for a verdict is itself a rhetorical device. A railway can be counted in kilometres and a port in tonnes; the dead of Thiaroye cannot be counted at all, because nobody counted them and the reports were altered. Anyone who produces a net figure has smuggled in a rate of exchange. **The correct output of a colonial accounting is not a balance but two lists, each as complete as the evidence allows, with the disputes shown** — and the reader's discomfort at not being given a total is a more accurate response to the material than any total would be.

Second: the most defensible achievements arrived last, and arrived because the arrangement was ending. The hospitals, the roads, the water, the vaccination campaigns and the money all date from 1946 or after — the same season as the abolition of the *indigénat*, the abolition of forced labour, and the extension of citizenship. For ninety-

two years the colony paid its own administration and returned a surplus to France; for fourteen it received. **The strongest evidence for the benefits of an order is therefore concentrated in the period when it had already lost the argument, which makes that evidence real and makes it a poor defence of the ninety-two years before it.**

Third, and the one this case establishes: the largest thing that happened in a colonised country during its colonisation may have nothing to do with the coloniser. The most consequential development in Senegal between 1854 and 1960 was not the port, the railway, the franchise or the groundnut. It was the completion of an eight-hundred-year religious conquest, in the space cleared by French guns and left empty by French policy, producing institutions that governed daily life more thoroughly than the administration ever did and a holy city that outgrew every colonial town but one. **An accounting that lists only what the ruling power built and what it destroyed will miss the thing that actually filled the century** — and in this case that thing was not on either side of the ledger, because it was never French business at all.

A note on sources. This module quotes no primary text; it is an accounting, and its figures are given with their provenance and their uncertainty attached. The demographic series for 1950 (population 2,496,065; crude birth rate 51.7 and crude death rate 28.1 per thousand; total fertility 6.79; infant mortality 148.6 per thousand live births; life expectancy at birth 36.43 years) and the 1960 population of 3,048,000 are from the United Nations World Population Prospects reconstruction as tabulated in the standard demographic reference for Senegal; **these are modelled reconstructions rather than colonial census returns, and should be treated as estimates with wide confidence intervals, particularly before 1950.** The Senegambian slave export estimate of about six thousand a year in the eighteenth century is Boubacar Barry's, and the treatment of the Gorée figure carries the sourcing given earlier in this study. **Casualty figures for**

the French conquest of Senegal are deliberately not given, no reliable total existing; the Waalo, Sine, Kajoor and Dékhelé figures repeat, with their ranges intact, those given earlier. **Forced-labour mortality in Senegal is stated to be unknown, and Albert Londres's figure of seventeen thousand dead on the Congo–Océan line is explicitly identified as an Equatorial African figure and is not applied to Senegal.** War service and casualty figures for French West Africa (on the order of 200,000 serving in the First World War with dead commonly reckoned near 30,000; about 150,000 African troops engaged in the Second) are federation-wide, are as commonly given in the literature, and have not been verified against ministry returns by this study; they are offered as orders of magnitude. The Thiaroye figures carry the full dispute set out in the preceding module and remain unresolved. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The account of the built infrastructure — the Dakar–Saint-Louis railway of 1885, the Thiès–Kayes line and the Guinguinéo–Kaolack branch, the development of Dakar and its designation as federal capital in 1902, the Pasteur Institute and the African School of Medicine, the William Ponty school, and FIDES investment from 1946 — follows the standard institutional and economic histories. The finding that French West Africa was a net contributor to French public finances until the Second World War and a net recipient thereafter is Élise Huillery's, carried forward from earlier in this study with the same caveat as to its revisability. The proportion of Senegal's export value represented by groundnuts (more than nine-tenths by 1930) is from the 1930 *Annales de Géographie* survey. The naturalisation figure of sixteen to seventeen new citizens a year between 1935 and 1949 is Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch's; the Senegalese chieftaincy establishment of the late 1920s is from the colonial political report cited earlier. **Statements about literacy at independence are given qualitatively rather than with a percentage**, the study having found no colonial-era literacy measurement it was willing to rely on; the observation that such literacy as existed was substantially Qur'anic, in Arabic and in Wolof *ajami*, follows the standard scholarship on Islamic education in Senegal. The growth of Touba into one of Senegal's largest cities follows the recent demographic and urban literature. **The characterisation of Islamisation as the largest development of the colonial century in Senegal is the study's own judgement, argued across this study from the evidence set out in its earlier modules, and is offered as an interpretation rather than as a finding of the scholarship.**

PRIVATE, SECOND CLASS

Module 12 · convergence and divergence — what this conquest shares with every other in the collection, what belongs to it alone, and the strongest case that can be made for the French century in Senegal, stated in full and answered without flinching

A case study in the Patterns of Power series · Thomas J. Bryan with Claude (Anthropic) · held as tested, not revealed

The man who spans it

Léopold Sédar Senghor was born at Joal in 1906, served in the French colonial army from 1939 to 1942 with the rank of private, second class, and was taken prisoner. He was a subject of the French Republic, holding no vote, liable to the *indigénat* outside four coastal towns, formed in French mission schools and then in Paris, and in 1940 he was one more African in French uniform when the country he was fighting for collapsed in six weeks.

He became the first president of independent Senegal in 1960, held the office for twenty years, and resigned on 31 December 1980 in favour of his prime minister. On 2 June 1983 he became the first African elected to the Académie française.

Private second class to the seat of an immortal, in forty-four years, in the same institutional world. That arc is the whole argument of this module, both sides of it, and it will not resolve into a verdict on either the man or the empire that made his career possible and very nearly ended his life.

What recurred

Set Senegal beside the other conquests in this collection and a small number of things repeat with no possibility of borrowing.

The armed men who could inherit nothing. The Wolof kings held their country with *ceddo* — warrior-slaves owning nothing, bequeathing nothing, owing everything to the throne. Faidherbe destroyed that class and, within a decade, raised its exact replacement under his own hand: an African corps recruited from men bought out of slavery and from the poorest, paid in plunder or in a manumission whose price was a term of service. His own biographer, having read his papers, calls the tirailleurs the governor's *thièdos*. The Ottomans reached the same answer with janissaries, the Egyptians with mamluks, and none of these parties was in a position to learn it from any other. The problem is identical wherever a ruler exists — the men you must arm are the men most likely to replace you — and the solution keeps being rediscovered.

The intermediary who must be found, used and eventually destroyed. Every conquest in this collection needs a class standing between a small foreign administration and a large native population. Senegal produced three in succession: the métis *traitants* of Saint-Louis, indispensable to the conquest and squeezed out of the groundnut trade within thirty years of the railway they had lobbied for; the appointed canton chiefs, paid by rebate on the tax they assessed and stripped of standing by that very arrangement; and finally the marabouts, who were not appointed at all and could not be dismissed. The pattern of use and disposal is general. What differs is only who is available.

The exhibit. A ruling order that must justify itself to an audience will find or manufacture a specimen, and the specimen's genuineness is what makes it work. Rome had provin-

cial senators; France had Blaise Diagne. The mechanism does not require fraud and functions better without it.

And the absorption of dissent by promotion. The one rank in the French colonial hierarchy whose incentives ran against the arrangement — the deputy elected by African voters — was not abolished. It was bought, at Bordeaux in 1923, and its holder ended as Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, denying at Geneva that forced labour existed in French Africa. Ruling orders that last do not silence their dissenting rank; they seat it at the table, and the price they pay is that everybody watching learns what the seat is for.

What was specific

Four things belong to this case and are, on the evidence assembled here, new to the collection.

The conquest that arrived in the middle of somebody else's. Everywhere else the coloniser met a foreign order that had finished becoming native — Caesar's Gaul worn into Roman Gaul, the seventh-century Arab conquest worn into the calendar of North Africa, the Chinese classics worn into what a Vietnamese scholar simply was. Islam had been on the Senegal river since the 1030s and had *not* finished. It held the clerical lineages entirely, was taking the villages steadily, and had been refused three times by the warrior aristocracy — in the Toubenan war of 1673–77, in the risings after Futa Toro's revolution, and at Bunxoy around 1796. European travellers had to invent the formula of a Muslim people with pagan kings because the situation had no existing name. France then destroyed the only organised power that had ever beaten the marabouts, declined to put anything of its own into the space, and watched the conversion complete itself in two generations. **A conqueror who arrives during an unfinished conversion is not a bystander to it. His violence is one of the forces deciding whether it completes** — and here it completed, and France

ended by paying rent on a machine its own guns had helped finish building.

The conquest that wanted the crop and not the ground. France declared every unregistered acre in Senegal vacant and masterless, took title, and then left the cultivator standing on it, because what it wanted grew there and needed him alive to grow it. No Mitidja, no White Highlands, a few hundred Europeans in Saint-Louis and a couple of thousand in Dakar. Algeria took the land and fought for a hundred and thirty-two years. Senegal took the harvest and got a brotherhood. **What a conquest comes for predicts nearly everything else about it**, and the cheapness of this one is the thread running through every module of this study — the thin floor, the absent settlers, the preserved village, the unopposed Islamisation, and finally the ease of the departure.

The exhibit that predated the thing it justified. In 1848 the Republic enfranchised a Black and métis electorate, seated a man of colour in its parliament, paid gold to slave-owners for ceasing to own men, and wrote into law that French soil frees whoever touches it — then quietly authorised its officials on that soil to turn the touching man away. Six years later it conquered the interior. **The proof of benevolence was on file before the thing it would be used to excuse.**

And the open door that changed nothing. British Gambia runs three hundred and fifty kilometres into the middle of Senegal and is rarely fifty wide. Portuguese Guinea lies south, Mauritania north. Tens of thousands walked out during the conscription years. And the order held, because the other side ran the identical machine — head tax, groundnuts, European buying houses, appointed chiefs — so that crossing changed the flag on the customs post and cost a man his lineage land. **An exit only counts if the other side is organised differently.** The exit that did work never crossed a border: it went east into a Murid community, where a man

got land and a marabout he actually believed in, and stayed on the tax roll and in the export figures the entire time. France came to prefer it, and it is why there was no peasant rising in sixty years.

The case for the defence

Now the strongest argument against everything above, stated at its full strength, in the terms its serious proponents actually use.

Senegal, alone in colonial Africa, had a functioning democratic politics for a century before independence. Its people voted in 1848, in a single college, on universal male suffrage, without renouncing their personal law — an arrangement no British, Belgian, Portuguese or German territory offered anywhere at any time. It sent a Black African to the parliament of a European great power in 1914, at a moment when Black men were being lynched in the United States and no African sat in any legislature in British Africa. Its citizens had the 1881 press law, African-owned newspapers, African lawyers, African mayors. Two of the largest extensions of rights in the history of the French empire — the citizenship law of 1916 and the law abolishing the *indigénat* and extending citizenship to fifteen million people in 1946 — were drafted and carried by Senegalese deputies, in Paris, by parliamentary means. The second has been compared, by historians who are not apologists, to the edict of Caracalla.

Senegal became independent in 1960 without a shot fired. It inherited a port, a trunk railway, a medical school, a Pasteur institute, a civil service, a currency, a legal system and a political class that had been running elections and newspapers for three generations. It has never had a successful military coup — a claim no neighbour can make. Its first president left office voluntarily; its second accepted electoral defeat and handed power to the opposition in 2000. Set that be-

side Congo in 1960, or Nigeria after 1966, or Algeria after 1962, and the comparison is not close.

And the men who built modern Senegal were formed by French institutions and said so all their lives. Diagne, Guèye, Senghor: French schools, French law, French parties, French parliamentary procedure. Senghor wrote in French, made French culture his own, championed *négritude* and the *francophonie* in the same breath, and ended in the Académie française not as a token but because he was one of the finest French poets of his generation. He was not a victim of French culture. He was one of its owners, and he chose it.

Whatever France's motives — and no serious person defends the motives — the outcome for Senegal was better than for almost any other territory colonised by anybody, and the Senegalese who made that outcome did it with tools France had put in their hands.

That is the case. It is not a straw man, it is not made in bad faith, and every factual claim in it is true.

The answer

Four responses, none of which requires denying a word of the above.

The comparison is to the wrong thing. Senegal in 1960 was better placed than Congo in 1960. But the counterfactual that matters is not Congo; it is Senegal without the century, and nobody knows what that would have been, because the ceddo states were destroyed before anyone measured them. Comparing the survivors of one system with the survivors of a worse system establishes that the second was worse. It does not establish that the first was good, and it certainly does not establish that a hundred and six years was the price of the outcome.

The good was concentrated where the audience was, and arrived when the argument was lost. The genuine

democratic practice existed inside four municipal boundaries covering about five per cent of the country, for ninety-eight years, while everyone else lived under summary punishment without trial. The hospitals, roads, water and money date from 1946 or later — the same season as the abolition of forced labour, in the decade when French West Africa turned from a net contributor to French public finances into a net recipient. For ninety-two years the ledger ran the other way. **Investment is evidence of position, not of intention**, and the strongest exhibits for the defence are all dated after France had stopped being confident.

The rights were extracted, not granted, and the paperwork proves it. The 1916 citizenship law is formally titled a law extending the provisions of the military law, and its operative clause ends *subject to the military obligations provided for by the law of 19 October 1915*. Diagne bought that citizenship with sixty-three thousand recruits. The 1946 law came in the year France needed to look like a Union rather than an empire, before an audience in Washington and at the United Nations. And when the words proved inconvenient, judges in Dakar held that one could not argue from *sont et demeurent citoyens français* that the persons named were French citizens. **Crediting France with the outcome credits the seller with what the buyer paid for.**

And the cost was not consented to by anyone who bore it. Life expectancy at 36.4 years in 1950. One infant in seven dead before its first birthday. Six thousand people a year out of Senegambia for a century, in a trade the French on the islands fought a war to protect. A country narrowed to one crop until a price movement in Marseille became a hungry year in Kaolack. Four hundred and thirty-five canton chiefs kept illiterate as calculated policy. And a camp at Thiaroye where men who had spent four years in German captivity asked for the pay they were owed and were shot, in numbers still unknown eighty years later because the reports were falsified and the graves have not been opened. Nobody

agreed to purchase a democratic tradition at that price, and it is not clear that the two are even connected.

What is left standing

And yet — because a study that ends there has flinched in the other direction, and this collection refuses both flatteries.

Something in the defence survives all four answers, and it is specific. France did not intend to hand Senegal a usable political instrument. But it did, because the Republic could not conquer in the name of the Rights of Man without carrying the Rights of Man into the place it conquered, and once there they could be picked up. The 1881 press law applied at Saint-Louis because Saint-Louis was a French commune. The deputy had parliamentary immunity because deputies do. The courts could be used because they were courts. Diagne could bargain in 1916 because there was a Chamber to bargain in.

That is not nothing, and it is not common. An empire with no franchise cannot have its franchise widened; an empire with no parliament offers nobody a lever. **A ruling order that justifies itself by a universal principle has, by that act, armed the people it excludes** — because the principle is stated in general terms, and general terms can be quoted back. The Senegalese quoted them back for a hundred years, and got something for it, and the thing they got was real.

The honest formulation is therefore double, and neither half cancels the other. The achievement was real and it was not France's gift; it was extracted, at a price, by people who used the only tools available and paid for them in blood taxes and recruits. And the tools were only available because France had, for its own reasons and to persuade its own public, insisted on describing its empire in the language of liberty. **The coloniser's story was not merely a covering;**

it was a hostage to fortune, and the colonised collected on it.

The last thing to say

The record does not permit a clean landing, and this study will not manufacture one.

Senghor imprisoned Mamadou Dia in December 1962 on a charge of attempting a coup and held him for twelve years; suppressed rival parties and ran a one-party state for more than a decade; and then, having reopened the field, walked away from power voluntarily in 1980 — an act rare enough on that continent in that decade to be worth stating without qualification. The country he left has held elections, changed governments by ballot, and never been taken by its army. The country he left also has, in the groundnut basin, villages whose economic position is not obviously better than it was when his grandfather grew peanuts to pay a head tax, and a national politics in which a marabout's word still moves votes — an arrangement built in the space France emptied and never filled.

That is not a story with a moral. It is a structure with a history, and the point of setting it out this carefully is not to arrive at a judgement of France but to be able to recognise the same machinery when it appears again wearing different clothes: the exhibit that makes an exclusion arguable; the punishment kept small enough never to be worth fighting; the incentive that buys compliance by destroying legitimacy; the intermediary used and discarded; the dissenting rank promoted rather than silenced; the story told to the people who pay rather than the people who suffer; and the universal principle that, once uttered, can be picked up by anyone.

Legibility is not pardon. But nothing here was hidden, and very little of it was even unusual. That is the disquieting part, and it is why the collection holds these things as tested and never as revealed.

A note on sources. This module is synthesis, and the substantive evidence for its claims is set out with full sourcing in the eleven modules and the landscape that precede it; those citations are not repeated here. The biographical facts newly introduced are as follows and are drawn from the standard record. Léopold Sédar Senghor's birth at Joal in 1906, his service in the French colonial army from 1939 to 1942 with the rank of *soldat de 2e classe*, his capture and captivity, his presidency of Senegal from 6 September 1960, and his resignation on 31 December 1980 in favour of his prime minister Abdou Diouf follow the standard biographical sources; his election to the Académie française on 2 June 1983 as the first African member is separately confirmed. **The account of the Mamadou Dia affair is given with its contested character intact:** Dia was prime minister from 1957, was removed following a censure motion carried in the National Assembly on 17 December 1962, was arrested and imprisoned on a charge of attempting a coup, and was released in 1974; the underlying causes of the crisis remain disputed in the Senegalese literature, and this study takes no position on whether a coup was in fact attempted. The suppression of rival parties from 1962–63, the limited reopening from 1974 and the constitutional reform of 1976, and Abdou Diouf's acceptance of electoral defeat in 2000, follow the standard reference accounts. All modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited throughout. **The comparison of the 1946 Lamine Guèye law to the edict of Caracalla is not this study's own; it is reported as a comparison drawn in the French and Senegalese commemorative and scholarly literature, and is placed in the case for the defence for that reason.** The convergence claims — the structural identity between the *ceddo* and the tirailleurs, between both and the janissary and mamluk arrangements, and the recurrence of the intermediary and the exhibit across the cases in this collection — are the study's own analytical judgements, argued from the evidence set out in the earlier modules and in the other studies of the series, and are offered as interpretation rather than as findings of the scholarship. **The case for the defence in this module is constructed by the study, not quoted from a named advocate; every factual assertion within it is sourced elsewhere in this study, and it is set out in the strongest form the evidence permits precisely so that the answer to it cannot be won cheaply.**